Changements institutionnels, statégies d'approvisionnement et de gouvernance de l'eau sur les hautes terres de l'Ouest Cameroun : exemples des petites villes de Kumbo, Bafou et Bali

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List of Abbreviations and Acronyms

BANDECA Bali Cultural and Development Association

BNA Buea National Achive

CAMWATER Cameroon Utilities Company

CARE Cooperation for American Relief Everywhere

CCAST Cameroon College of Arts Science and Technology

CCIAC Cameroon Industrial and Civic Contractors

CDC Cameroon Development Corporation

CDE Camerounaise des Eaux

CEFAM Local Government Training Centre

CORUS Coopération sur la Recherche avec les Universités du Sud

CPDM Cameroon Peoples Democratic Movement

CSP Council Support Programme

CUSS Higher School of Health Science

DO Divisional Officer

ECOSOC UN Economic and social Council

ENS Ecole Normale Supérieure

FCFA Franc de la Communauté Financière Africaine

FGDs Focus Group Discussions

FEICOM Fond d'Equipement et investissement des Communes

GWP Global Water Partnership

ICWE International Conference on Water and the Environment

IMF International Monetary Fund

IRC International Water and Sanitation Centre

IWRM Integrated Water Resource management

KWA Kumbo Water Authority

MDGs Millenium Development Goals

MINATD Ministry of Territorial Administration and Decentralization

MINEE Ministère des Eaux et de l'Energie

NGO Non-Governmental Organization

NOWEFA North West Fons' Associations

NOWEFCO North West Fons' Conference

NSODA Nso cultural and Development Association

OECD Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development

PNG National Governance Programme

PNDP Programme National du Développement Participatif

PPCP Public Private Community Partnership

PPP Public Private Partnership

PWD Public Works Department

SAPs Structural Adjustment Plans

SATA HELVETAS Swiss Association for Technical Assistance

SCANWATER Dutch Water Company

SDF Social Democratic Front

SNEC Société Nationale des Eaux du Cameroun

SONEL Société Nationale de l'Electricité

UNCED United Nations Conference on Environment and Development

UNDP United Nations Development Programme

UNEP United Nations Environmental Programme

USTDA American Agency for Commerce and Development

VDAs Village Development Associations

WRM Water Resource Management

WSSD World Summit for Sustainable Development

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Ngefor Gillian Sanguv

Dedication

To my beloved mom, the late Florence N. SANGUV.

Rest in peace

Abstract

The objective of this study was to explore the emerging contradiction between on the one hand, the water policy conducted in Cameroon since independence and secondly, the urban realities of “informal” water control and use on the other. The concepts of "governance" and "community" were used to analyze how people individually or collectively claimed, their water rights and how such claims were legitimized while the negotiability/flexibility and hybrid concepts were used to analyze how resource rights and access are negotiated (informal and formal) and contested in view of changing conditions. The concept of "civil society" was used to reflect the multiscale nature of power and its standardization in networks of daily life, thereby regulating the practices and social relations. Results show that there are a number of local level institutional arrangements that govern access to potable water in communities which may vary depending on the source, ownership (privately owned or communally owned) interest and the purpose for which the water will be used. Traditional leaders, “elected” leaders and the relevant water point committees tend to complement each other in developing institutional arrangements and enforcing these. The study concludes that the informality of institutions and property rights in small town water governance harbor complex socio-economic situations, which is a common feature in the three study sites (Bali, Bafou and Kumbo), where rights overlap in both time and space with a variety of different degrees of intensity being applied in the management of different water schemes. Such processes are not predictable, because of the specific characteristics of each community, and one has to deal with setbacks and conflicts.

Keywords: Water Governance, institutional fragmentation, community, hybrid, civil society, formal, informal

Résumé

L'objectif de cette étude consistait à explorer la contradiction naissante entre d'une part, la politique de l'eau menée au Cameroun depuis l'indépendance et d'autre part, les réalités urbaines de contrôle et d'usage informels de l'eau. Les concepts de « *gouvernance* » et de « *communauté* » ont été utilisés pour analyser comment les populations affirmaient, de façon individuelle ou collective, leurs droits sur l'eau et comment de telles revendications étaient légitimées. Les concepts de « *négociabilité* » et de « *flexibilité* » ont permis de comprendre comment les droits d'utilisation et d'accès à l'eau étaient négociés et contestés en fonction de conditions changeantes. Le concept de « *société civile* » a été employé pour refléter le caractère multi scalaire du pouvoir et sa normalisation dans des réseaux de la vie quotidienne, régulant ainsi les pratiques et les relations sociales. Les résultats montrent l'existence d'un grand nombre d'arrangements institutionnels de niveau local qui régissent l'accès à l'eau potable dans les communautés. Les leaders traditionnels, les représentants élus et les comités de gestion des points d'eau potable tendent à se compléter dans le développement et l'application des arrangements institutionnels. L'étude conclut que l'informalité des institutions et des droits de propriété dans la gouvernance de l'eau des petites villes semblent entretenir des situations socio-économiques complexes. Il s'agit là d'un point commun entre les trois sites étudiés. En définitive, la multiplication des acteurs de l'eau a débouché sur une sorte de chevauchement des compétences de contrôle et de gestion tant dans l'espace que dans le temps.

Mots clés: Gouvernance de l'eau, fragmentation institutionnelle, communauté, hybride, société civile, formel, informel

0. INTRODUCTION

The water crisis that humankind is facing today is largely of our own making. It has resulted not only from the natural limitations of the water supply or the lack of financing and appropriate technologies (though these are serious constraints), but also from profound failures in water governance especially in Africa, i.e., the ways in which individuals and societies have assigned value to, made decisions about, and managed the water resources available to them (UNDP, 2003). As Patricia Phumpiu has suggested "*in recent decades a rapid growth in interest in governance implies that it has become one of the most influential concepts in economics, sociology, political science and development studies. This broad applicability of governance has resulted in a vast number of works published and a variety of theoretical approaches and studies in which the concept is used*" (Phumpiu, 2008, 1). Effective water governance is seen as the best means to achieve the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). MDG 11 specifically sets a global goal of reducing the number of people without access to safe water by 50%.

0.1 Debates on access to water by international organizations

In the September 2000 United Nations Millennium Summit 189 heads-of-state adopted the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), with time-bound targets in 2015, which aimed to solve the most pressing issues developing countries face. The World Bank estimates 80 countries, representing 40% of the global population, suffer from water shortages and inadequate sanitation. In addition to thirst, these countries; mostly Third World countries, see their economic development hampered by this problem since water plays an essential role in industry and agriculture. This is a real issue whose consequences affect future health of millions of people. In 2000, the UN had announced that one of the ambitions of article seven of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) - was to cut by half the number of people without access to safe drinking water by 2015. According to the UN, "only" 783 million do not have access to safe water resources. On Monday, May 13, 2013 the World Health Organization (WHO), one of the UN agencies reassessed the official figure at 2.4 billion - a third of the world population. In addition access to water and sanitation can serve as a critical factor for meeting all the other goals, including eradicating extreme poverty and hunger; promoting gender equality and women's empowerment achieving universal primary education, combating major diseases, reducing child mortality; improving maternal health, and improving environmental sustainability. Moreover the overall Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) were reviewed and reaffirmed at the Johannesburg World Summit for

Sustainable Development (WSSD) in August 2002, and additional targets related specifically to water and sanitation were added.

This notwithstanding, the UNDP (2001) reports that 20% of the world's population still lack access to safe drinking water. The crisis is caused by the ways in which we use water . But the real tragedy is the impact of this crisis on the lives of the poor who suffer from water-related diseases, living in degraded and often dangerous environments. As population increases alongside their activities, there is a constant rise in the demand for water for instance, for drinking, household uses, industrial uses, irrigation and agriculture. Meanwhile other activities such as tilling, clearing, draining and well-drilling exert a lot of pressure on water resources and ecosystems (Lekunze, 2001). In this light water is no longer considered as a cheap resource, which can be misused, squandered and mismanaged without long-term consequences on the environment and humans. Moreover, the Second World Water Forum in The Hague, Netherlands, (2000) considered water security as the principal obstacle for sustainable development in the twenty-first century. Biswas et. al. (1993) claim that new sources of water are becoming scarce, require more money, expertise and technological knowledge to develop, and are increasingly leading to social environmental disruption. Nevertheless, the causes of water degradation and the resultant impacts are particular to each locality and region of the world, although the case of Africa calls for some special concern.

The water situation in the continent of Africa is highly problematic. According to UNDP (2001), 25 countries in Africa will face water scarcity or stress by 2025 and sub-Saharan countries present the highest figures with about 51% and 41% lacking access to safe supply and sanitation respectively. It is estimated that by 2020 there will be between 75 and 250 million Africans who will not have the estimated daily amount of water they need to survive. While some Africans barely have 10 to 40 liters of drinking water, North Americans consume 600 liters per day. Water pollution mainly affects poor people living in urban slum areas. According to studies, women and children suffer the most from lack of water. The poor who are forced to use polluted water often end up with health problems because of bacteria. The polluted water consumption leads mostly diarrheal diseases such as dysentery, typhoid, cholera, etc..

Approximately 16% of the African continent's population (230 million people) will be subject to water scarcity by 2025 (ECOSOC 2000). 14 countries are already experiencing water

stress; another 11 countries are expected to join them by 2025. A number of factors account for this. Firstly, climate variability is causing drought, desertification and other 'natural' disasters. Rainfall, the major source of water varies from one part of the continent to the other. Water bodies such as rivers, lakes, marshes, and coastal waters that support life for both humans and wildlife, are degrading. Other sources of water such as wells are under threat of desertification and are depleted, thus accelerating the migration of pastoralists into marginal lands. Secondly, land clearing for agriculture, encroachment of poor people into the forest and subsequent felling of trees pose a threat to the water retaining capacity of forests which lead to the reduction of available water. Furthermore, siltation by soil erosion continues to shorten the life span of reservoirs.

Africa faces a crisis of endemic poverty compounded by high levels of indebtedness and slow economic growth. For humanity, the poverty of a large proportion of the world's population is both a symptom and a cause of the water crisis. Improving access of the poor to better managed water, can contribute significantly to poverty eradication (Ndiaye,1993). Better water management will allow us to address the problem of increasing water scarcity in many parts of the developing world.

Since the oil crisis of the mid-1970s the economic performance of many sub-Saharan countries has been poor especially in the agricultural sector (Mkandawire 1995). Moreover, the World Water Forum (2000) stresses that water and socio-economic development are mutually dependent. This study, echoing Lekunze (2001) therefore contends that water is a valuable but vulnerable natural asset. When properly managed it can be an instrument for poverty alleviation, economic recovery and economic growth but when poorly managed water can rather serve as a limiting factor in poverty alleviation, resulting in poor health and low productivity, food insecurity, and constrained economic development. The World Water Forum (2000) further contends that these could be obstacles in a vicious cycle that puts societies in a downward spiral of poor economic development and poor access to safe and adequate water supply and sanitation.

Alternatively, says the same report, many developing countries have multiplied their efforts and reinforced their governance systems by putting into place measures, plans and laws in the domain of water. The concept of governance encompasses laws, regulations, and institutions, but it also relates to government policies and actions, to domestic activities, and to networks

of influence, including international market forces, the private sector and civil society (Baron, 2003). These in turn are affected by the political systems within which they function. National sovereignty, social values or political ideology may have a strong impact on attempts to change governance arrangements related to the water sector (Rodgers and Hall, 2003), as I will show in the thesis..

European countries can be considered to have developed the best experiments in new forms of water governance, for example the Water Directive Framework (DCE), and the creation of structures like the Groupe des Organismes de Bassins Européens (EURO-RIOB), etc. On the contrary, only a few developing countries (South Africa first on the list) have engaged in reforms and developed actions with a view to meeting up with national and international objectives as concerns water resource management. Unfortunately, it seems not to be successful for most developing countries, Cameroon included, where water management is still in an embryonic stage (Kenmogne et al, 2006). Disparities are quite visible in the distribution of water resource within the country as well as in its quality portraying the challenges faced by Cameroon in its water management. It is worth mentioning at this stage, the need to satisfy the ever increasing water demand (considering the fact that the Western Highlands of Cameroon the focus of this study has the highest natural growth rate figures thus the highest population density), environmental protection, and the respect for regional and international obligations.

Globally, the issue of water is becoming more disturbing. Some experts share the view that water problems are already precarious in some regions and the situation will only get worse in the years to come. The ever increasing population growth in our planet will be accompanied by an explosion of water consumption and degradation of its quality. This could seriously jeopardize the supply of fresh water and consequently aggravate conflicts between and within countries. Faced with this life-threatening water shortage, the International Conference on Water and the Environment (ICWE) held in Dublin in January 1992 and the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED) held in Rio de Janeiro, June 1992 are increasing attempts to develop a shared global vision for the management of water resources and to obtain the political commitment needed to solve this problem worldwide (Lekunze, 2001). With much difficulty these meetings developed a comprehensive action strategy and came up with a new paradigm of water management referred to as Integrated Water Resource Management (IWRM). These Dublin-Rio conferences express a

comprehensive, multi-disciplinary approach to globally solving water resource problems at different institutional levels. The IWRM approach is multidisciplinary and according to Sherbinin and Dompka (1996) it represents a critical step towards achieving sustainable solutions which is possible only through joint efforts. IWRM is recognized for the importance its places on the concept of local participation as stressed in Agenda 21 of the UNCED and emphasized by the former UN Secretary General, Koffi Annan, "without the fullest participation of people at all levels of society the goal of full coverage of water supply and sanitation is unlikely to be obtained" (UNEP 2001). This thesis argues that, community participation in water governance is based on a combination of local knowledge and communities who have been empowered and accorded rights to water resources, and that where such a model can be developed there is a greater likelihood of having sustainable water schemes. Unfortunately, integrating and ensuring cooperation between the different actors is hard, due to conflicting interests, different sectoral plans and different stakeholders, who most often possess different access rights or entitlement to water resources.

The aim in this study is to present a coherent discussion of water governance in Cameroon, and its relationship to water management and development. In the last two decades, the concept of Integrated Water Resources Management (IWRM) has been widely adopted as a means to ensure democratic structures which can ensure equitable, sustainable management (economic and environmental) of water resources and supply of water services. IWRM constitutes a new approach which emphasizes on the need for significant changes in existing interactions between politics, laws, regulations, institutions, civil society, and the consumer (Rogers and Hall, 2003). However it is certain that the ability to make these changes greatly depend on changes in governance. Governance is thus very dynamic and can take many different forms depending on the economic, cultural and traditional political norms of a country and the interactions between the legislature and legislators.

Water supply in 'rural' Cameroon has been officially delegated to NGOs and private agencies who mostly employ the community approach. There are more than seven thousand community water supplies in Cameroon accompanied by many local and international organizations. Our main interest in studying community water supplies is influenced by the national figure (more than 7, 000 water schemes) and the population served. Secondly we are particularly attracted by the Western Highland region of Cameroon which has 42.85 percent of these community water supplies.

Community water management in Cameroon is a combination of different formal forms of co-operation between different actors of the water sector, support agencies and communities. It aims to identify problems faced in community water supply systems, the possibilities for, and constraints on management, as well as possible solutions that may be developed. It considers communities as active participants rather than the passive receivers, who can contribute and account for their actions (Lammerink et al, 1999). Cooperation can be in the form of partnerships and ownership based in the community. Community management though focused on increasing the effectiveness of water supply systems, is also strongly concerned with participation and democracy. Through studying community water schemes we wish to know how the institutional and political dimensions can hinder or stimulate community management, as well as institutions, politicians and policy. It seemed interesting that I participate in this debate by studying the case of the Western Highlands of Cameroon - a region with abundant precipitation but a shortage in potable water supply.

Two concepts run through the dissertation. They are presented to foreground the dissertation. The first is the concept of *governance* as used in the 'government to governance' debates found in the political science literature and other disciplines. The debates are helpful for defining governance and positioning jurisdictional fragmentation within broader trends, as well as for distinguishing water governance from water management. The second is the concept of *community* as an institution. Here, the discussion narrows in on property and other institutions to frame the institutional dimensions of water governance.

0.2 Context of Study

There are many reasons for choosing to study community water supplies in the Western Highlands of Cameroon. , The choice of the precise research sites was based on the fact that they all presented interesting specificities that we will be analyzing (for instance, the two cases in the North West region have existed for over 40 years meanwhile the case of Bafou presents diverse water strategies adopted by the Bafou population to meet their needs). This section also introduces the research methods adopted in this study and wrestles with the issue of whether these sites are rural or urban or are hybrids of both spaces.

0.2.1 Problem statement, research questions and hypotheses

Integrated Water Resource Management (IWRM) is accepted in Cameroon as the starting point for policies best suited to tackling the problems of sustainable water resources management and development, and assuring water security. However, conditions for the effective use of the IWRM approach are not yet in place. The difficulties faced in applying the approach are many. Firstly, there is an information gap on water resources and the water distribution in Cameroon. The coordinating authorities (national and regional) arehighly fragmented and sectoral management approaches predominate. Secondly, the judicial system and commitment to implementing existing rules and regulations is lacking, as are the human and institutional capacities and capital for assessment and monitoring. However, measures to improve water security are under way, including: decentralization, the development of new forms of local government and the transfer of some water management responsibilities to local levels. Moreover, the awareness of the need to encourage participation, the quest for more equity, overall state/public withdrawal in financial and technical terms and the need for new public-private partnerships (PPPs) for rural and sub urban water schemes are the main objectives.

In Cameroon, community management through the participatory approach seems not to be a "magic wand" for solving problems in the water sector or for the state (which has embarked on decentralizing or privatizing water provision). Neither is it a recipe that can be replicated wholesale.

Enquiries within the Western Highland region of Cameroon demonstrate that although the approach and theory is similar for all projects, the stories of how the process evolves in practice are diverse. In every community (be it Kumbo, Bali, Bafou and other cases we will use as examples to illustrate some of our views such as Nkwen and Tombel) selected within this study, the process has been very different, in terms of both the pace and the content. Although in each case the communities are now better able to manage their water supply systems, the institutions, rules and structures that have underpinned this enhanced capacity are also diverse This diversity again demonstrates that communities have designed their own management systems, rather than follow a blueprint provided by support agencies (Lammerink et al, 1999). In the cases chosen in this work and other sites the water schemes share fewer common points and many differences which we think are based on the evolution and type of partnerships that exists.

As in many other African states, Cameroon experienced a period of considerable political and economic upheavals in the early 1980s and 1990s. The country's money supply was cut off as it came under pressure from international lending agencies to introduce political and economic reforms. This crisis forced Cameroon to undertake structural adjustments whereby privatization and decentralization were adopted as economic reforms. The result of this process of decentralization/privatization of the water sector has led to the proliferation of small remote water supplies a consequence of a self-reliant attitude developed by communities especially in suburban and rural areas. Meanwhile some other water supplies were built still under state control with the assumption that the population would cover costs or if not, the state will be able to subsidize these expensive systems. The state did not hesitate to express its disappointment as it noticed that they operated at a loss in small towns and villages and reacted by retreating leaving these areas to local government and local community management.

National water policies in Cameroon can be seen to act as a hindrance to community development. The radical social and political transformations that are taking place in the Cameroon water sector (most recent structural adjustment effects, on-going democratization processes) call for a wider and more effective participation in the processes of water management by all groups of stakeholders. The objectives underlying policies and reforms at the national level often appear mutually exclusive, ranging from social equity to economic efficiency and from environmental conservation to rural and urban development concerns. Meanwhile there is a greatdivergence between policies and their implementation. The decentralization of the Cameroon potable water sector (Société Nationale des Eaux du Cameroun; SNEC to Cameroon Water Utility Company; CAMWATER) for example clearly delegates (Decree n° 2005/493 of 31 December 2005) the supply of sub urban and rural areas to private enterprises and NGOs whose competence and accountability is not stated. This is backed by the fact that these potential actors figure nowhere in the legal and executive laws of this sector. Thus there are problems for the Cameroon government transferring *powers* to *actors* who are not *accountable* (Larson and Ribot, 2004). This situation pushes us to question the effectiveness of the management framework of water supply projects.

Leadership is an important factor for an effective participative management. The issue of leadership in most local water projects in the Western Highlands of Cameroon is very critical

as it stands as the main factor behind the success/failure of all the water supplies to be studied in this research work. If the leadership of a community is committed and receptive to change, the process is likely to proceed smoothly (Tayong and Poubom, 1999). But based in this present context where most of the local leaders are too dominant and want to pull all the benefits to their interest, democratic participation is hardly possible. Being the backbone in local development, the challenge is to open up "charismatic" leaders to new functions and attitudes, without destroying the respect they have in the community, or transforming them into bureaucrats. In the Western Highlands of Cameroon, sometimes a community has various "interest groups" struggling over the same water scheme, so that a lot of work has to be devoted to resolving conflicts and starting negotiations. The interests (economic, political and social) of these groups (NGOs, elites, associations, traditional rulers and the local population) can divide communities, hampering efforts to encourage them to manage their water supply systems. It is evident that a proper integration of different stakeholders will bear positive results.

However, partnerships are quite difficult to put in place due to the complexity of the rural-urban (hybrid)[1] nature of the study sites as well as the socio-economic environment. One of the aspects that render this region unique is the dual administrative organization; with a traditional setup made up of chiefs and their entourage who retain powers which most often surpass that of state actors like mayors and divisional officers (Préfet). The result of any construction contract will consequently depend on the contractor's, transparency and their willingness to respect the rules[2] put in place. Public-Private Partnerships (PPP) and more precisely Public-Community partnerships which are most common are quite delicate due to the conflicting interests, powers and jurisdiction between actors (chieftaincy, state, NGOs etc) leading to a general (local and national level) institutional failure.

The Western Highland communities are heterogeneous and complex social realities. For this reason, it is hard to single out the water management from other concerns. The capacity of the management system can only be successful when there is a clear understanding of the

[1] The term hybrid will be developed later in this study to comprise of three main aspects visible in our study sites and not only refer to management models as can be readily concluded. The three aspects are the rural/urban characteristics presented by the sites, the dual administrative framework (chieftaincy and councils). Thirdly the term hybrid will also be used in this study refer to the fact that management models do not exist in their pure forms.

[2] It is necessary to emphasize here that with the dual administrative(traditional and state) nature of this region, there also exist a two sets of rules (informal and formal)

economic, social and cultural characteristics of the community. There are and have always been great differences in water project performance between regions, participating groups, as well as among the communities in any one region. In some communities we can identify extensive and comprehensive management institutions and regulatory frameworks for their water supply systems, (as in the Anglophone regions of Cameroon with better managed community water systems), while others are still struggling with the concept of participatory management, such as in the Francophone regions as will be discussed subsequently in this study. These differences are due to many different factors, many of them rooted in the socio-economic structures of a community. For the facilitators(International donors, the state and NGOs) of community management processes, it is hard to come with a box of participatory tools. They first need to understand the community's social and economic relations, leadership, cultural or religious aspects, the different interests, and be able to use methods and tools in flexible ways.

A common early difficulty encountered by many regions was the "dependency culture" (Lammerink et al, 1999) instilled in many rural and small town communities. After decades of paternalistic relations between the state, small towns and rural communities, it is only now that some communities need to take more responsibility. For the past decades, communities have always been guided by state agencies playing the role of regulators and providers: the state supplies the services, and community are on the receiving side and carry out state-imposed tasks. In such circumstances, it is not surprising that communities resist the idea of community management. Meanwhile in some regions of Cameroon for example, there is still need for creativity and understanding, both at initial stages, and throughout the process, to lure communities and local organizations to adopt the process. (This situation can maybe explain the relative reluctance of the francophone Cameroon developing their capacity of "self reliance").

Community management cannot be addressed in isolation from the institutional context. In it based within a wider framework of actors working in communities, all of them seeking to improve participation and local management. Such initiatives should be integrated. Literature and research in the management of community water supplies in the Western Highland region of Cameroon portray it problematic with undemocratic internal configurations which do not encourage participation nor provide opportunities to learn. In a democratic society,

community management stands the chance of succeeding because it will be embedded within wider context of rules of democratic governance (Tayong and Poubom, 1999).

All in all, new governance over local water supplies and its allocation is required. To face this emerging challenge, new organizations are to be established, and new institutions envisaged. A clear and urgent need exists for innovative approaches, frameworks and tools facilitating negotiation and participation processes promoted and implemented by these newly established (or still establishing) organizations (Perrett et al, 2006). The complexity of the different study zones in the Western Highlands of Cameroon renders the application of a particular institutional framework always inefficient. The hybrid governance recognizes that the complex political, economic and social (social organizations) systems cannot be readily governed by a single actor. Between the different institutional extremes (public, private, community), there is a growing movement towards the hybrid perspective, which tries to combine all the different aspects of water (public good, social good economic good etc) with the diversified interests of the actors as well as the various scales of management (local or national).

It's within this context that a practical question arises about **how communities and organizations can be established in small towns and rural regions of the Western Highlands of Cameroon, based on participation and sustainability principles?** And secondly: **how should the different underlying objectives of all the actors (e.g. social equity, economic efficiency, and environmental conservation) be combined within a coherent and integrated implementation framework considering the complexity (diversity) of the communities?** Subsequently, we are prompted to ask **how can the powers and accountability of local actors (all stakeholders) be guided to ensure efficient and sustainable projects?**

Not only was our attention drawn to the problem underlying community-driven water systems in the North and Southwest regions (that make up the Anglophone region of Cameroon) but we widened our scope of reflection to the Western region (Francophone) where diverse strategies have been used to meet the water needs of the population. In particular we noticed that this region was marked by a far higher dependence on water supplies constructed and managed by individuals and far less by dependence on water supplies managed by communities. We questioned why these different modes were adopted within an overall

region (the Western Highlands) with relatively homogenous cultural backgrounds. Based on the above analysis we put forward the following hypothesis:

An adaptive hybrid governance system with a democratic involvement of all stakeholders of community water supplies can ensure an efficient sustainable and equitable water supply in the Western Highlands of Cameroon.

This hypothesis is based on the fact that of all the community water projects that have drawn our attention as of now, there exists no single model. All of them are hybrids of the community model with each tilting towards the direction which it is convinced is most sustainable. The objective today is to regroup water systems towards a more uniform model no matter the hybrid adopted. Though they present very complex social, cultural, political and economic societies, unique rules seem not to apply. Public Private Partnerships, (PPP) which are now being proposed as remedy models to the community approach constitute a continuous metamorphosis of words handed down by international bodies and researchers. What particularly interests us in our fields of study is the fact that the types of partnerships (hybrids) that exist are what authors like Sharma and al (2013) call the Public-Private-Community Partnership and adaptive co-management to others. This partnership although seeming to be spontaneously developed can also be what has been adapted to best suit the Western Highland population who portray more social cohesion than the rest of the country. In this region chieftaincy still cannot be set aside in any level of a development project. Being one of the new models proposed by researchers today, the adaptive hybrid management approach could act as a challenge to the other models to obtain positive short term results while forecasting uncertainties.

Consequently, communities are believed to be subject to changes especially in the long run period. This approach privileges a series of reforms which act in a network. Be it financial, technical, institutional or environmental reforms, it is necessary to ensure an integration of the population and their authorities, a transitional, experimentation and training phase, flexibility in the application of laws and regulations. Above all this school of thought also presumes that each community or project be treated singly while taking into consideration the peculiarities and heterogeneity of every community (their capacity and willingness to pay for water, their social organisation etc).

If we were to be interested in the "flexibility" and "specific context" aspects of the adaptive hybrid management or adaptive co-management approach there will certainly be a real difficulty to adopt prices/levies[3] for the running of systems, especially in very poor regions. It is impossible for the state to focus on providing or supporting pro poor projects as models differ with the communities. They range from pure community-managed water systems to community/state partnerships and external aid. In addition is it also difficult for the state to publish uniform prices for volumetric water while taking into consideration the fact that this remains very vital for the sustainability of systems. This analysis drives us to put forward some secondary hypotheses:

Water commodification is inevitable at least for cost recovery and maintenance of equipment with prices unanimously accepted by users.

Adapting the prices per unit of water consumed should be treated with utmost caution. Two main reasons lie behind this reasoning. Not only will it ensure the sustainability of projects but it can be the cause of serious confrontations if poorly done. In this light we put forward the hypothesis that **community water projects in Cameroon serve as arenas for displaying socio-political and economic grievances and interests between communities and the state.** Communities in Cameroon have often used the increase in water prices as an entry point to contest many other grievances against all state actions. Unfortunately other regions (like Bafou in the Western Highlands with individualistic water accessibility strategies), lack common platforms to express their grievances against the state.

Whilst some regions in Cameroon try to solve their water problems through community-driven approaches others have adopted quite different modes of access ranging from boreholes and wells, to piped water systems. This situation was observed in the Anglophone and Francophone regions of Cameroon and our interest was to trace the origin of these differences, we proceeded by assuming that: **Historical reasons explain the differences in the adoption of the community philosophy in the South West/North west regions (Anglophone) and what is observed in the Western region (Francophone) of Cameroon.**

Our reflection was guided by our observations in three regions in the North West and Western regions of Cameroon both of which are found in the Cameroon Western Highlands. In the next section we will elaborate on the specific reasons that led us to adopt the regions chosen.

[3] The term levy to us fits better to some projects where there exist no metering and the users pay for bulk water; in most cases annually. That is the case of Nkwen we studied in our Master's thesis.

0.2.2 Choice and justification of study sites

Within the context of this study, three sites were chosen in the North West and Western regions respectively that constitute the Western Highlands of Cameroon. They are Bali and Kumbo in North West Cameroon and Bafou in the Western region.

The Western Highlands region of Cameroon constitutes the most densely populated region of the country with population densities greater than 100 inhabitants per km² (See figures 6 below). This situation is thus a call for concern as most recent studies point out the short-comings of community-managed water supply systems. The region has the highest number of community water supplies which in the case of the North West region for example provides for the water needs of more than 80% of the population both rural and urban (Helvetas 2004, Fonchingong and Fonjong, (2002) unlike the Western region with just 1.46 percent (Table 1). Considering the fact that most of these projects eventually fail to meet the initial objectives, it was interesting that this study evaluates and forecasts the impact on the more than three million people served by local water projects in the Western Highlands.

Table 1: Different water accessibility strategies in Bafou

Water sources	Identified numbers	Percentages (%)
Wells	1172	81,45
Deep wells	54	3,75
Tanks	34	2,36
Springs	36	2,50
Private Connections	57	3,96
Community water supplies	21	1,46
Water points	42	2,92
SCANWATER	23	1,60

The Western Highlands of Cameroon constitutes the watershed of most water sources, a relatively homogenous physical environment (climate, relief, hydrography, soils etc, see figure 1, 3 and 4) and social organisation yet facing severe water problems.

The Western Highlands comprises of the North West Region, the Western region and part of the South West region. The North West and South West regions make up the Anglophone part of Cameroon. The people of the Western Highlands have always been considered as having many common points (cultural, physical and social) although they are composed of two Anglophone regions and the western region mostly French speaking. Meanwhile the question

that arises is why are there so many differences between the Anglophone and Francophone parts when it comes to adopting the community water supply philosophy even though they have many social, cultural and economic similarities (the physical similarities are presented in the figures 1, 4 and 5 below).

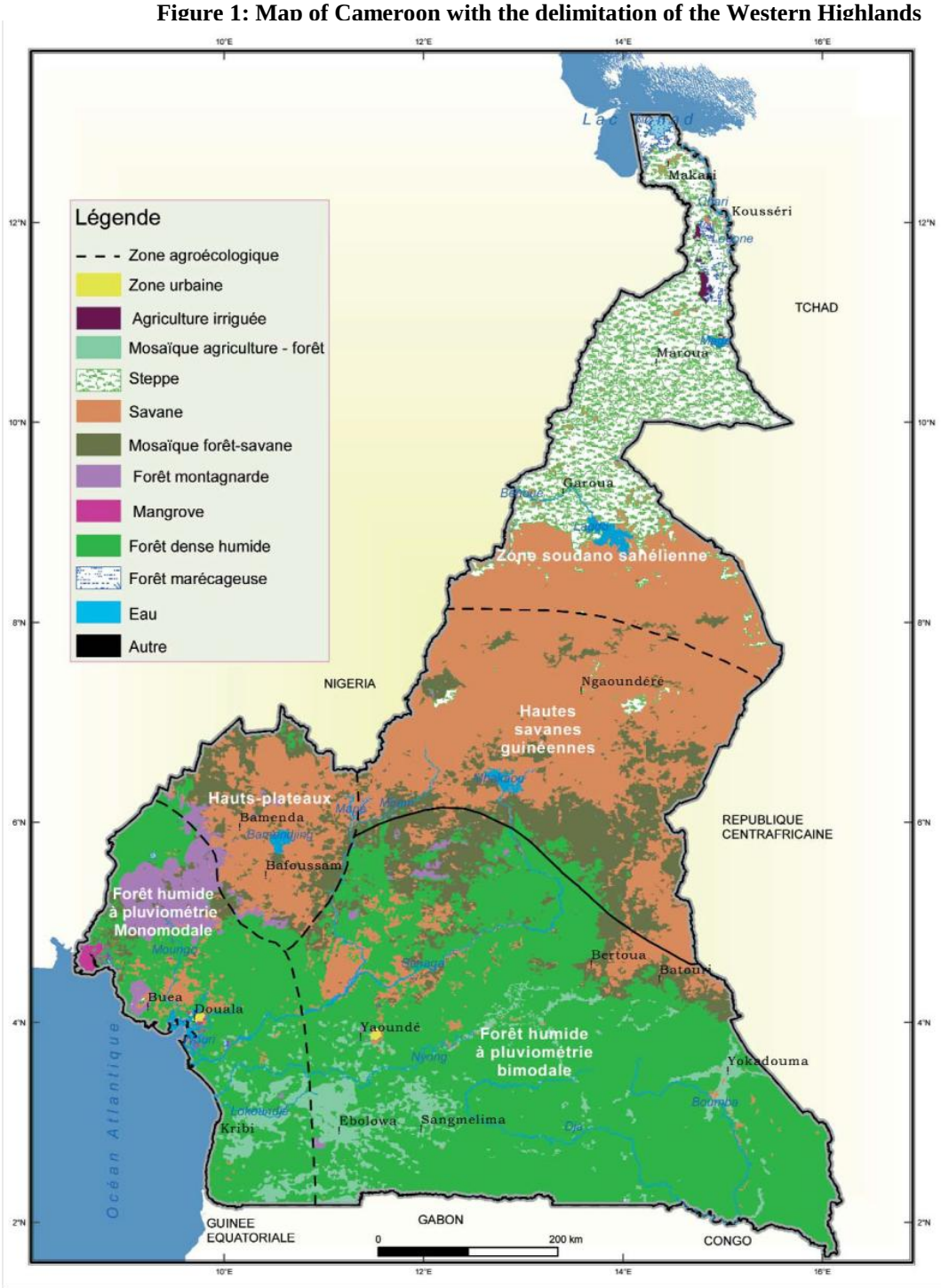
Most studies carried out on community water management show a distinct preference for Anglophone regions if they are concerned with the community philosophy and its application. The reason for the choice of both an Anglophone region and a Francophone region in this thesis is to carry out a comparative study in relation to the community perception in these two regions within the same country/region, both portraying very common cultural and physical characteristics. Apparently, community-managed water supplies in these two regions seem to have a diverse approach with relative visible degrees of success of water projects in the two regions. At first sight there exists a peculiarity of the Western Region, which is the relatively individualistic approach preferred to meet up with their domestic water demands as compared to the widespread community approach in the Anglophone regions of Cameroon.

Within the framework of the CORUS (Cooperation sur la Recherche avec les Universités du Sud) project carried out by University of Toulouse 2 in close collaboration with the University of Dschang in Cameroon (Department of Geography- Planning and Environment) involving Masters and doctorate students with myself participating in the team of researchers on the field, considerable data was collected in Bafou and Bandjoun (Western Region) respectively. The data collected in these regions in the domain of domestic water supply needs just some adaptationto meet the demands of this study. Bafou (Menuoa division in the western region), a village in the western region will be chosen within the framework of this study because of the diverse approaches used by the local population to solve their water needs, community water supplies inclusive. Within the context of the above research we identified 1200 wells in Bafou and 1800 in Bandjoun. This showed that more than 70% of the Bafou population are supplied by individual wells. On the contrary as stated by Helvetas and Fonchingong 80% and 85% (Tanga and Fonchingong, 2009) respectively of the North West region have their water supplies from community water systems.

Kumbo and Bali (Kumbo and Mezam divisions respectively) will constitute the study sites in the North West Anglophone region. The evolution of the water projects in these regions present striking observations which could give interesting scientific analyses for the

management of community water supplies based on their socio-economic and even political history. That notwithstanding, our analysis could also extend to the case of Nkwen studied during our master's research. Since 2005 when we began this research we have been observing interesting incidents in many water supplies, from time to time we will not hesitate bringing such ideas to fortify our analyses. Meanwhile it is hard to readily say if these regions are rural, urban or sub urban. We used the definitions of some prominent authors to define the status of the regions to be studied. Nevertheless, we could not ignore the specific characteristics (we can observe simultaneously the superposition of state and traditional authorities) presented by these areas. Summarily, our study sites will permit us to examine three main dimensions of their hybrid characteristics that make them unique. Their territorial, (rural/urban features), administrative (presenting traditional/state actors and institutions) and complex socio-cultural dimensions.

Figure 1: Map of Cameroon with the delimitation of the Western Highlands

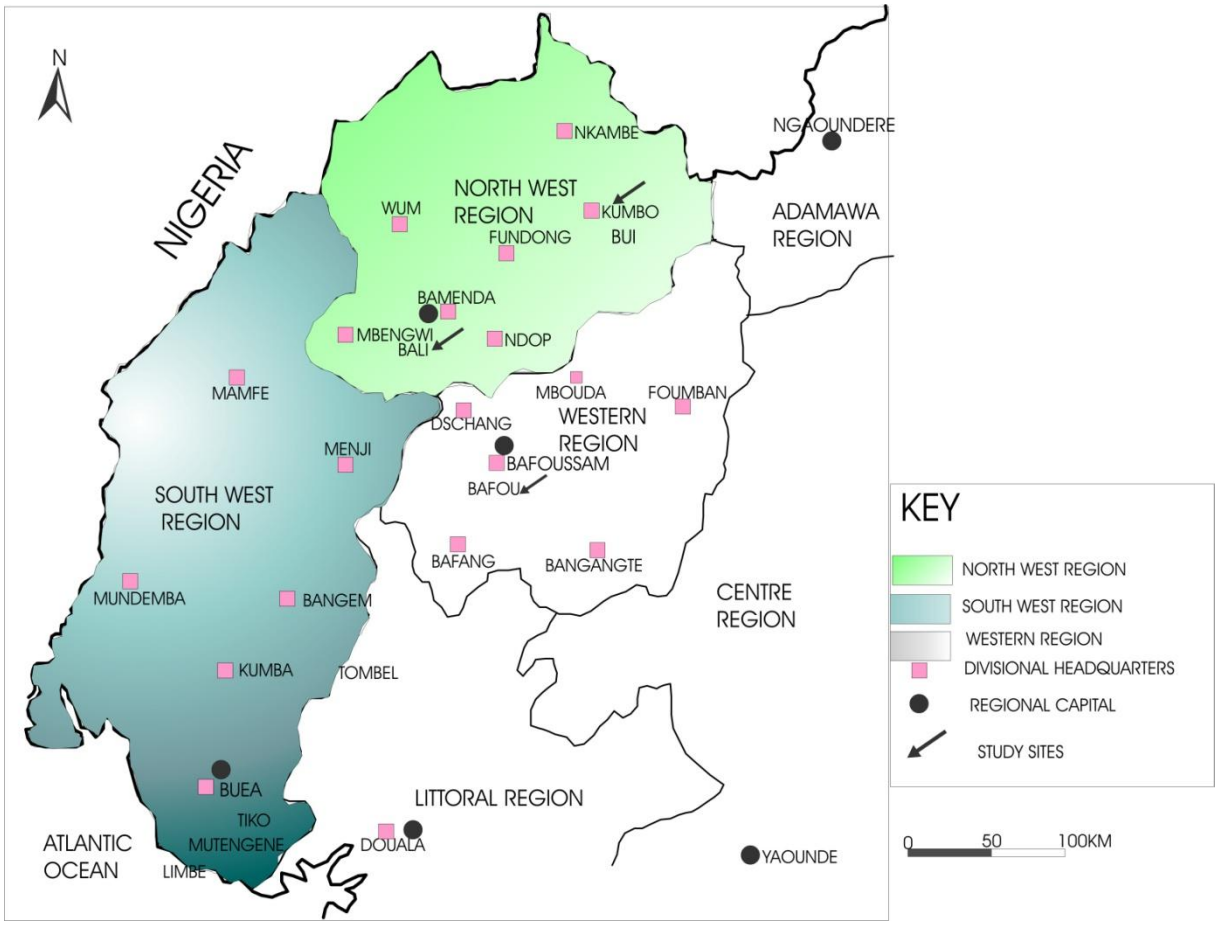


Source : Atlas national de développement physique du Cameroun

Figure 2: Delimitation of the Cameroon Western Highlands extending to the coast

Source: Ngefor G.S.,2014

Figure 3: Location of study sites



Source: Ngefor G.S., 2014

0.2.3 The Rural/ Urban dichotomy in defining study sites

There is much confusion in confirming if the study sites are urban, rural or suburban. Whether a block is urban is at the core of debates and discussions related to the notion only render it more complicated. The answer to the question of an area being urban or rural requires that we have an agreed upon definition of what it means to be urban (or rural, since we presume the two categories to be mutually exclusive: ie as concerns water management, every water system should be assigned to exactly one category or the other). This situation permits us to shape our analyses in any given context while addressing water governance issues.

In Cameroon and in most other countries there are very specific but controversial criteria about whether a block could be labeled urban, suburban or rural. With many complications in landuse patterns and rules in deciding «urban-ness» the term in this study will be used with much caution. Generally the definition criteria have to do with density of settlements and proximity to other urban blocks.

Considering the fact that all three study areas have population figures over 40,000 inhabitants (Kumbo, more than 100 000 inhabitants, Bali more than 50 000 and Bafou more than 100 000) one could readily talk of large urban areas. Meanwhile following the administrative structures of these regions, predominantly governed by traditional heads, they simultaneously present urban and rural features or better still hybrid characteristics. Kumbo is the administrative headquarters of the Bui division while Bali and Bafou are subdivisions. They bring out the different characteristics that are typical of small towns. We emphasize here that there is need to place these sites as they are situated differently by different authors as large urban towns maybe while taking into consideration their population sizes, others as villages based on their traditional attachments and still as sub urban spaces based on their hybrid character.

We share the third view and it's within this context that we could adopt the term sub-urban or small towns to designate the areas of study. We should note that the use of the term sub-urban or small towns is not only based on the administrative perception but essentially on the classification of towns by water and sanitation analysts as illustrated subsequently.

0.2.3.1 Sub-Urban Zones or Small Towns?

Sub-urban zones or small towns develop around towns due to uncontrolled physical growth and greatly influence the urban environment. Today some of these are becoming full fleshed cities themselves with dynamic development activities, high demand for food, energy and vibrant socio-economic structures. Consequently there is need to understand these spaces in order to understand further issues.

Nevertheless, though these spaces are attracting much attention, these sub-urban interfaces are still poorly understood. While some consider them as towns, others think they are large villages. In this light, in relation to water supplies it is hard to readily classify their systems as rural water supply nor as small urban systems, or rather approach them as extensions of urban water supply (Moriarty et al, 2002, Ryan and Adank, 2010).

Conceptually "small towns" are difficult to understand. They lie somewhere in the continuum between the truly urban (towns and cities, with the corresponding infrastructure and institutions) and truly rural (villages). Many international forums and conferences have been working on how to classify small town water and sanitation. In this scientific session

suggestions to define small towns were made based on a number of characteristics, including size, technology water source, management type, operation and maintenance requirements and local infrastructure (Moriarty et al, 2002, Ryan and Adank, 2010). Based on these discussions during the conference, the following was concluded.

"*Small towns are settlements that are sufficiently large and dense to benefit from the economies of scale offered by piped supply systems, but too small and dispersed to be efficiently managed by a conventional urban utility. They require formal management arrangements, a basis for ownership and management, and the ability to expand to meet the growing demand for water and sanitation. Small towns usually have populations between 5 000 - 50 000 inhabitants but can be larger or smaller*" (David and Pilgrim, 2000:3).

The list put forward covers a number of the more important aspects of small towns which we can summarize into four main characteristics: - they host a high population with business and trade centres that attract people from rural areas, and are dynamic and constantly evolving environments. -They are frequently at the intersection of major transport links (roads, railways, rivers). -Thirdly, they frequently lack the 'homogenous' or 'cohesive' community of rural areas, but have yet to develop the neighbourhood structures of true towns (Ryan and Adank, 2010). -Lastly, they often lack a clear presence in institutional arrangements and can be managed at either the local municipal level or at the regional/district level (Njiru and Sansom, 2002).

This is probably wise rather than attaching a particular definition to small towns. The main points are: rapid growth, a variety of systems and the need to take a long term and a flexible approach to planning its needs. What constitutes a small town is highly context dependent, perhaps the simplest way to think of them are as rural areas in the process of becoming urban, and in need of support to make that transition (Pilgrim et al, 2004). Water provision should consider the ever increasing population, improving infrastructure (roads, electricity), economic growth and changing levels of education, and the rural-to-urban population movements. While migration to mega-cities receives much of the international attention, the mutation of villages or roadside "business centres" into larger settlements and then into genuine towns is largely ignored.

0.2.3.2 Sub-Urban Zones or Small Towns and Water

Water supply and sanitation in small urban centres has drawn increased attention during the last two decades. This is due to the fact that small towns are home to more people than rural communities and with the relatively poor level of service in them, there's growing consensus that they deserve better. In addition, concerning water, there is the possibility of identifying two main characteristics for small towns. Firstly, they have a combination of different water supply systems with variable levels of service that constantly struggle to meet up with the increasing demand. Secondly, they are home to people with limited income and purchasing power - a situation that influences their ability and willingness to pay for better services.

0.2.3.3 The Small Town's Challenge in Water Provision

Just like any development process, urbanization brings more benefits to some people than other in terms of service provision, with access to adequate water and sanitation services being a major challenge. Future service demands in these spaces need to be defined with much care; a planning tool is needed that helps the management of uncertainty which may include rapid, often unplanned growth. The capacity to develop adaptive governance approaches which not only lay emphasis on technical or managerial model, but adopts dynamic and flexible combinations including diverse water supply options and systems for the different sectors and stages of development. In this light governance approaches aimed at improving water supply in small towns must forecast uncertainty: such as expandable technically and institutionally structures, to meet the increasing size of small towns over a 10-20 year horizon (Moriarty et al, 2002). This entails undertaking realistic scenario planning as well as access to reasonable data on which to base plans. Small towns are different from rural areas in that their waters have a wider range of potential uses and are also much more affected by the behaviour of people due to the greater population density (Moriarty et al, 2002).

As presented above it is quite difficult to distinguish between small towns, peri-urban, sub-urban regions and rural areas. Within the context of this study considering the fact that all three study sites present populations above 50,000 inhabitants and portray hybrid characteristics (administrative and land use) they will be considered as small towns. As difficult as it is to define these spaces much of the complexity in what concerns water supply strategies has to do with the diversity of the population in solving their water problems. In

Cameroon, just like rural areas most sub-urban and small towns have adopted varied community water supply strategies which we deemed necessary to view.

0.3 Water Management Models for small towns

As mentioned by Moriarty et al (2002) there are many management models for small town water services. No single model can suit the needs of water supply in all small towns. The applicability of any one model is very context specific with the adaptive management model a recent notion. In each small town there exist a range of management models. Below we will try to identify the typology of management models of water services in small towns as proposed by Pilgrim et al (2007) and attribute them to our case studies. That is community Water User Associations, Municipal Water Departments, Autonomous Town Water boards, small scale private water companies, national or regional utilities serving (a group) small towns and which are less common. We should note that these water management models hardly exist in their pure forms. In most if not every case they are hybrids. We considered it necessary to give a quick view of these small town models.

0.3.1 Water Associations

In this management model, communities are the decision makers is largely, represented by an elected board, the executive body of the water association. Nevertheless, property rights are either with the central or local government, or are delegated to the water association. The operation of water systems can be done locally, through executive committee or via a contract with a private operator. This model is highly dependent on grants for long-term investments.

0.3.2 Water Boards

This model is usually adopted and installed through by-laws and contracts. The water board can include representatives from local government, local professionals or the private sector. It tries to apply accountable mechanisms. The model can be applied to small and large towns provided that local government is active in the town unlike the preceding model. The box below gives an example of the case of Kumbo.

Box 1: the Kumbo case in between two models

In Kumbo, a model has been established that requires the town to put in place and to have them work with the Kumbo municipality through a contract. Since 2008 the Kumbo Water Authority (the water management board) is working together with the council. This makes us think that this Kumbo model is more of the "co-operative management" where ownership is shared between the Kumbo water authority and the Kumbo council.

0.3.3 Municipal water departments

In the case of Municipal water Departments, the municipality is the owner and is responsible for the management of the system. In this model the water system can either be under the mayor or the municipal council. Operation and maintenance can be carried out through the municipal staff. Within the municipal arrangement Moriarty and al (2002) identify possible sub models; the direct municipal management, autonomous municipal management but an independent water body manages operation and maintenance and Co-operative management: ownership is shared between a municipality and a community based organization, whereby the community chooses the operator.

0.3.4 Small-scale private water companies

In this management model property rights depend on the legal basis (license or type of contract), including the funding sources. Small-scale private companies are usually established as privately-owned, partnerships, or limited liabilities. They normally have been granted a license or a concession contract and are fully autonomous in respect to management. Commercial pressure ensures that they employ trained staff or train them. The box below gives an example of how small scale companies work in Cameroon.

Box 2: Small scale private companies and community water development

In Cameroon, small communities and municipalities are now responsible for managing small town systems directly. A new management model was put in place which encouraged management by local private operators and NGOs. This was done within the wider framework of Structural Adjustment Plans. Under this model the state signs contracts with individuals and companies (Such as SCANWATER) for the management of small town systems. Local authorities and users are not party to the contracts, but do play an important role in the selection and appointment of the operator. Today, many operators are running small town systems especially in the francophone regions of Cameroon where it has proven to be a difficult task to impart the community driven approach.

0.3.5 Delegated Management

According to Moriarty et al (2002)delegated management is a model in between small-scale private providers and pure municipal With this model, the main responsibilities such as capital investments and capital maintenance expenditure are carried out by the municipality but transfers some tasks like operation and minor maintenance to a third party. This approach is also used by water boards and water associations. However, most of these models can also be used in rural water schemes.

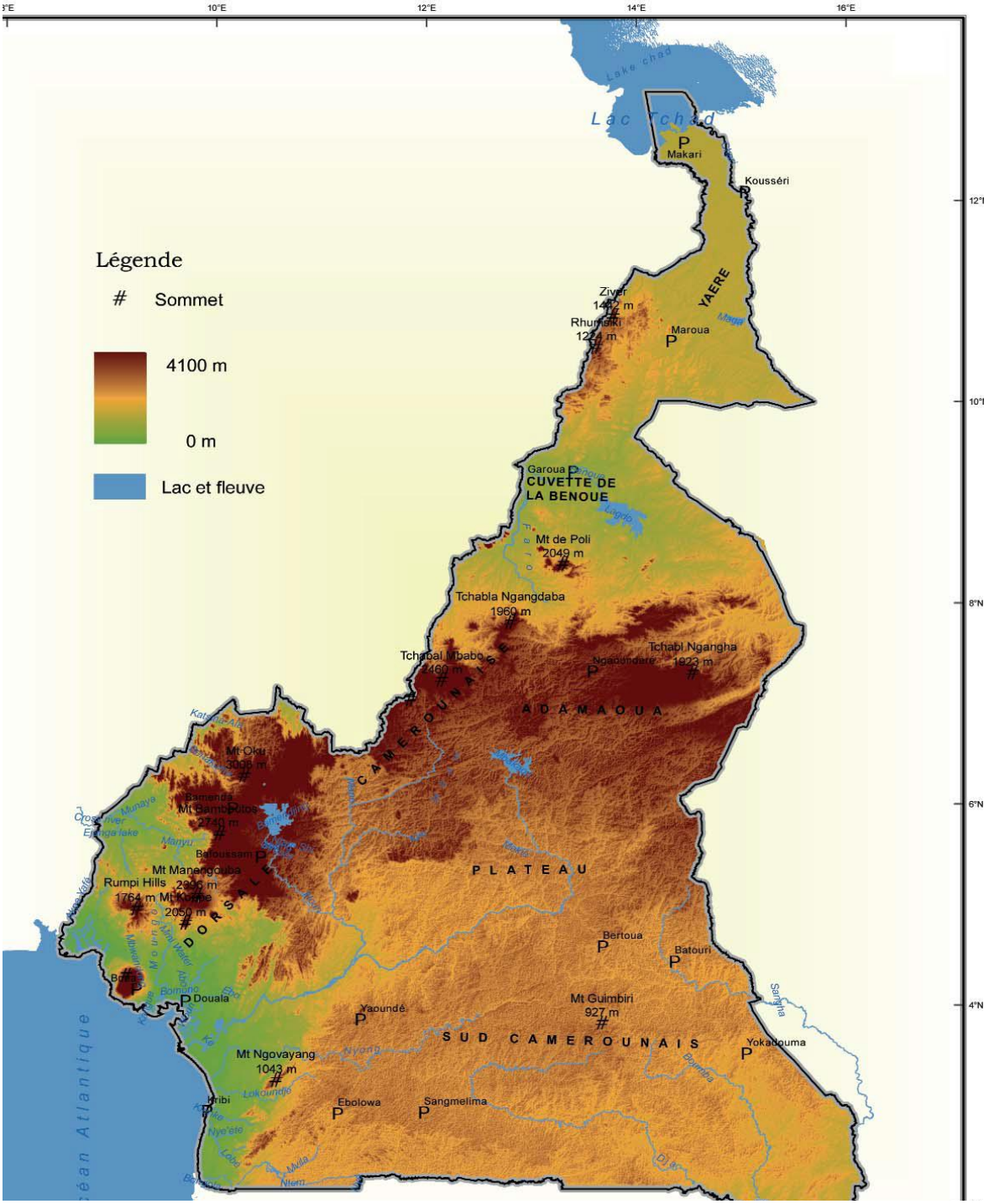
Following the above definitions to define spaces, in the context of water and sanitation as put forward by many authors (Moriarty et al, 2002, David and Pilgrim 2000) we will present the study sites as small towns as they present the characteristics and models that so far are characteristic of small towns. Later, we will verify which of the above models fits best in the different cases we will be analyzing.

0.4 Physical Environment of the Western Highlands, Cameroon

The Western High Plateau, Western Highlands or the Grassfields[4] is a region of Cameroon characterized by cool temperatures, high relief, heavy rainfall, and savanna vegetation (Acho-Chi, 1998). The region lies along the Cameroon fault line and consists of mountain ranges and volcanoes made of crystalline and igneous rocks. The region borders the South Cameroon plateau to the southeast, the Adamawa Plateau to the northeast, and the Cameroon coastal plain to the south. The plateau rises in steps from the west. To the east, it terminates in mountains that range from 1,000 meters to 4,100 meters (Mt Cameroon) in height.

[4] The term grassfields was first coined by the Germans to describe the Bamenda Highlands which was geographically different from the forest coastal region (Fowler and Zeitlyn, 1996).

Figure 4: Map of Cameroon showing relief

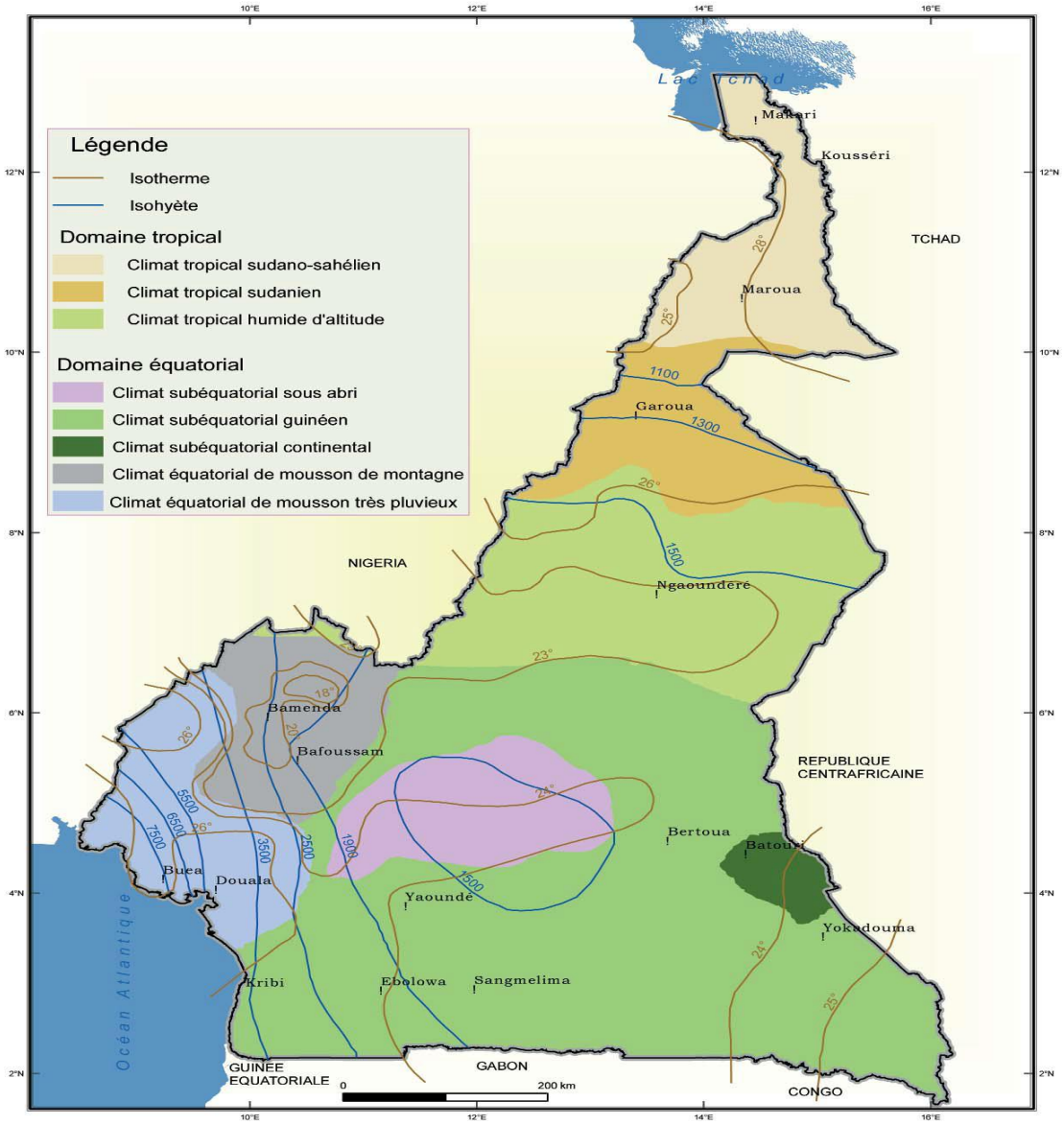


Source : Atlas National de développement physique du Cameroun

The vegetation pattern is influenced by the climate and anthropogenic activities with patches of irregular forest, savannah woodland, dense and modified forest vegetation. Montane woodland, open grassland and gallery forests of tall trees are found in deep valleys. Very little of this climatic climax vegetation remains today. Remnants of species of a rainforest type

occur in gallery forests that have given way to derived savannah (as is the case of the Western Highlands in Figure 1 above) due to intense agro-economic activities. Thus, the original forest has been replaced by different kinds of savannah distinguished from the original forest and woodland by having a continuous grass layer.

Figure 5: Map showing climatic zones in Cameroon



Source: Atlas National de développement physique du Cameroun

Depending on the number of fires and amount of farming, the tree savannah could almost become woodland consisting of trees around six metres that form canopies and sparse grass cover beneath. This stunted form of savannah can be seen in the Western Highlands with an equatorial climate of the Cameroon type. The area experiences two major seasons: A long wet

season of seven months (mid March – mid October), and a short, dry season of five months. During the wet season, humid, prevailing monsoon winds blow in from the west and lose their moisture upon hitting the region's mountains. Average rainfall per year ranges are about 2,000-mm. High elevations give the region a cooler climate than the rest of Cameroon.

The Western Highland's relief and high rainfall make it a major watershed for Cameroon. There exist important rivers in the region which follow a Cameroon regime, a subtype of the equatorial regime. This means that the rivers experience a long, high-water period during the wet season and a short, low-water period during the dry season. The region's rivers ultimately empty into the Atlantic Ocean. The area's geography gives rise to several waterfalls along these waterways. Crater lakes dot the plateau, the result of dead volcanoes filling with water. The Western Highlands was once heavily forested. However, repeated anthropogenic activities have forced the forest back in areas along the waterways and have allowed grasslands to expand into the area. Sudan savanna forms the dominant vegetation. This consists of grassfields-leading to the name grassfields, short shrubs and trees that shed their foliage during the dry season as a defense against bush fires and dry weather. Raffia palms grow in the valleys and depressions.

0.5 Socio economic aspects of the Western Highlands of Cameroon

The population in the Western Highlands of Cameroon is a conglomerate of many ethnic groups, comprising the native population and a significant proportion of immigrants from other provinces and from foreign countries, particularly Nigeria, with whom these share boundaries. The native population comprises a variety of ethnolinguistic groups[5]. However, the main ethnic groups are: Tikari, Widikum and Fulani. Colonial masters created administrative boundaries that cut across ethnic groups and cultures. As a result, parts of some ethnic groups now lie in different division regions and countries. This is believed to be the cause of many land conflicts, which exist till date.

In the Western Highlands (officially known to comprise of the North West, South West and Western regions) the social organisation recognizes at its head a chief, also called the *Fon*[6].

[5] We wish to recall that Cameroon has more than 250 ethnic groups which mostly exist today like villages sharing the same language, heritage, culture and identity which they have always defended through intertribal wars and resistances to colonial penetration

[6] "*fon*" is the name given to chiefs in the North West region of Cameroon. We will use it frequently in this study as they often intervene in the local development.

These chiefs, who sometimes in their tribal area may be more influential than administrative authorities, are enthroned as the living representative of the ancestors. It is thus a region presenting many social classes; a factor that plays an important role in the problem statement of this study.

Being an important push factor to the choice of this site (the Cameroon Western Highlands) as my study area, this region has a population of 4, 789, 990 million (with 1.804, 695, 1.785. 285 and 1.2 million in the North West, Western and South West regions respectively) inhabitants (2005 Population and Housing census figures of Cameroon). Studies carried out by Tanga and al (2009) and Helvetas (2004) hold that more than 80% of the North West Region and about 50% in the South West is supplied by community water supplies. Although to a lesser extent in the Western region worries in this study are based on the sustainability of these systems and the fate of the over 2 million people supplied.

Cameroon's Economy in Brief

From 1994, new economic policies based on monetary adjustments were put in place; leading to a gradual change in trends. With the devaluation of early January 1994 accompanied by a decline in nominal public wages (-50% between January and December 1993), there was need to restore macroeconomic balance and promote growth in the post devaluation regime. Finally, the post devaluation regime is also characterized by stagnation of poverty. The 2 dollar per day, poverty rate affects 31% of the population (2007). External debts incurred increased from less than half to more than three quarters of the GDP between 1984-1985 and 1992-1993. The investment rate decreased from 27% to less than 11% of the GDP.

All attempts to cover the internal and external debts at the time failed completely. This degrading process made Cameroon eligible to be classified as a Highly Indebted Poor Country (HIPC), decided upon in May 2000 by the administrative council of the IMF and World Bank,. This was thanks to efforts put in place by the government; making Cameroon to attain this status in October 2000.

Social indicators also deteriorated sharply from 1986, after a long period of improvement. Life expectancy at birth increased from 42 years in 1960 to 53 in 1987, fell below 50 years in the early 2000s. Between 1983 and 1993, the poverty rate increased from 49 to 71% in rural areas, 1 to 20 % in Yaoundé and 2-30 % in Douala (AFD / Macroeconomics & Development /

November 2012). The reduction in the standards of living and the influence of the state in the economy did not seem to be making the situation any better. Economic indicators were not encouraging. A continuous decrease in revenue induced a 40% drop in consumption per Cameroonian between the years 1985-1986 and 1992-1993. Since the 1994 devaluation, Cameroon follows a trend characterized by a slow growth. Growth largely (90%) based on private consumption and investment between 1994 and 2008; it contributed 19% of the GDP.

In the production sector, since 2000, growth is driven by the service sector and agriculture to a lesser extent. Employment rates decreased by 10% and reached 17% in 1995. In 2001, unemployment affected more than 12% of the active population, 16% in urban areas and 8% in rural areas; with Douala and Yaoundé registering 18% and 14% respectively. This gap seems to be filled by the involvement of people in the informal sector, yet very precarious and unstable. In the educational sector, the drastic reduction of subventions to education could be seen in the insufficiency or halt in the construction of classrooms; a decrease in the teacher to student ratio, due to the low employment of teachers; insufficiency of teaching and learning materials and inefficiency in the management of the whole system. These same problems were encountered in the domain of health. Till date, the health system is still seriously affected. The patients/doctor ratio is one for 10 000 inhabitants, one nurse for 2250 inhabitants and one hospital bed for 770 patients. The degrading situation of the health system coincides with the appearance of new challenges in the health sector. The most remarkable is HIV/AIDS and malaria which accounts for 40% to 50% of consultations and 28% of admissions. Hence, the life expectancy still remains low (54), infant mortality very high (94/1,000 births) and death of mothers at birth estimated at 430 cases in every 100 000 births.

From a macroeconomic angle, short term objectives were to increase the GDP, reduce inflation rate to less than 2%, and maintain current accounts between 2.5% to 3% of the GDP. To balance public finances, the objective was to increase non-petroleum revenue from 15% of the GDP in 2002-2003 to 16% in 2003-2004 and reduce budgetary deficit to less than 3% of the GDP. In the midterm, it will be to strive for a GDP of at least 6% from 2004-2005; which will increase the GDP per head to about 3 to 4%, an amount that can reverse poverty standards in a country having a population growth rate of 2.9%. Measures are being taken to boost investment from 18% of the GDP in 1999-2000 to 19.8% in 2003-2004 and the internal savings rate to 19% of the GDP during this same period. All these aim at enhancing competition, completing the process of regional integration and diversifying production. It

also aims at increasing the national production of electricity and maintenance of the Douala Sea Port.

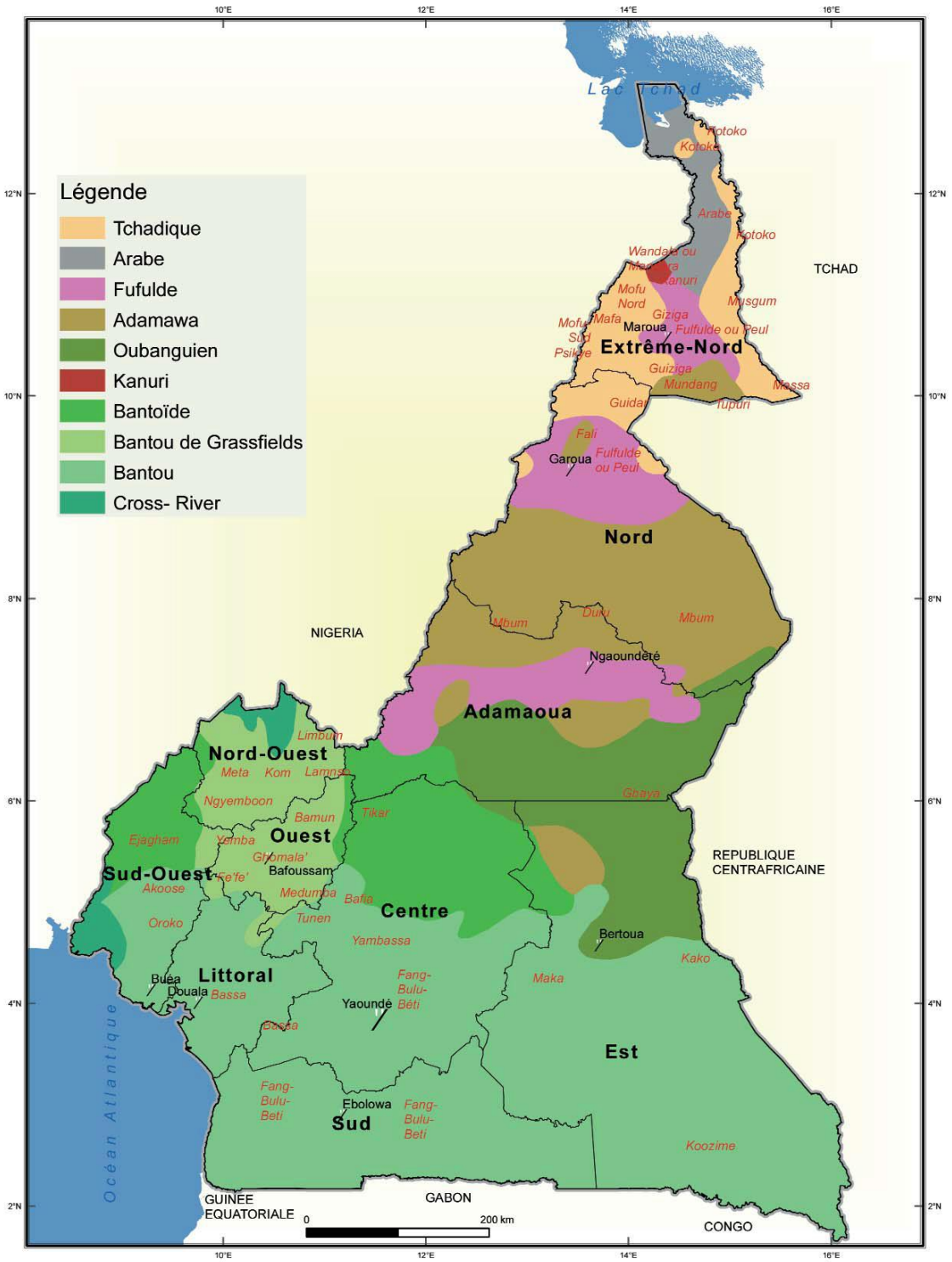
Summarily, Cameroon although being one of the top sub-Saharan economies in terms of its primary commodity portfolio (such as its petroleum and agricultural potentials), has not kept pace with its neighbours who have fewer resources.

Box 3: Some economic figures on Cameroon

There are efforts to speed up structural reforms such as budget transparency, privatization, and fight against poverty. **GDP - Gross Domestic Product:** - $USD27 billion (2002 estimate.) **GDP - Gross Domestic Product - growth rate:** 4.5 percent (2002 estimate.) **GDP - Gross Domestic Product - per capita:** - $USD 1,800 (2002 estimate.) **GDP - Gross Domestic Product - composition by sector: agriculture:** 45 percent **industry:** 20 percent **services:** 35 percent (2001 estimate.) **Population below poverty line:** 50 percent (2000 estimate.) **Inflation rate (consumer prices):** 5 percent (2002 estimate.) **Labor force:** NA **Labor force - by occupation:** agriculture 65 percent, industry and commerce 15 percent, other 20 percent **rate of unemployment:** 30 percent (2001 estimate.)

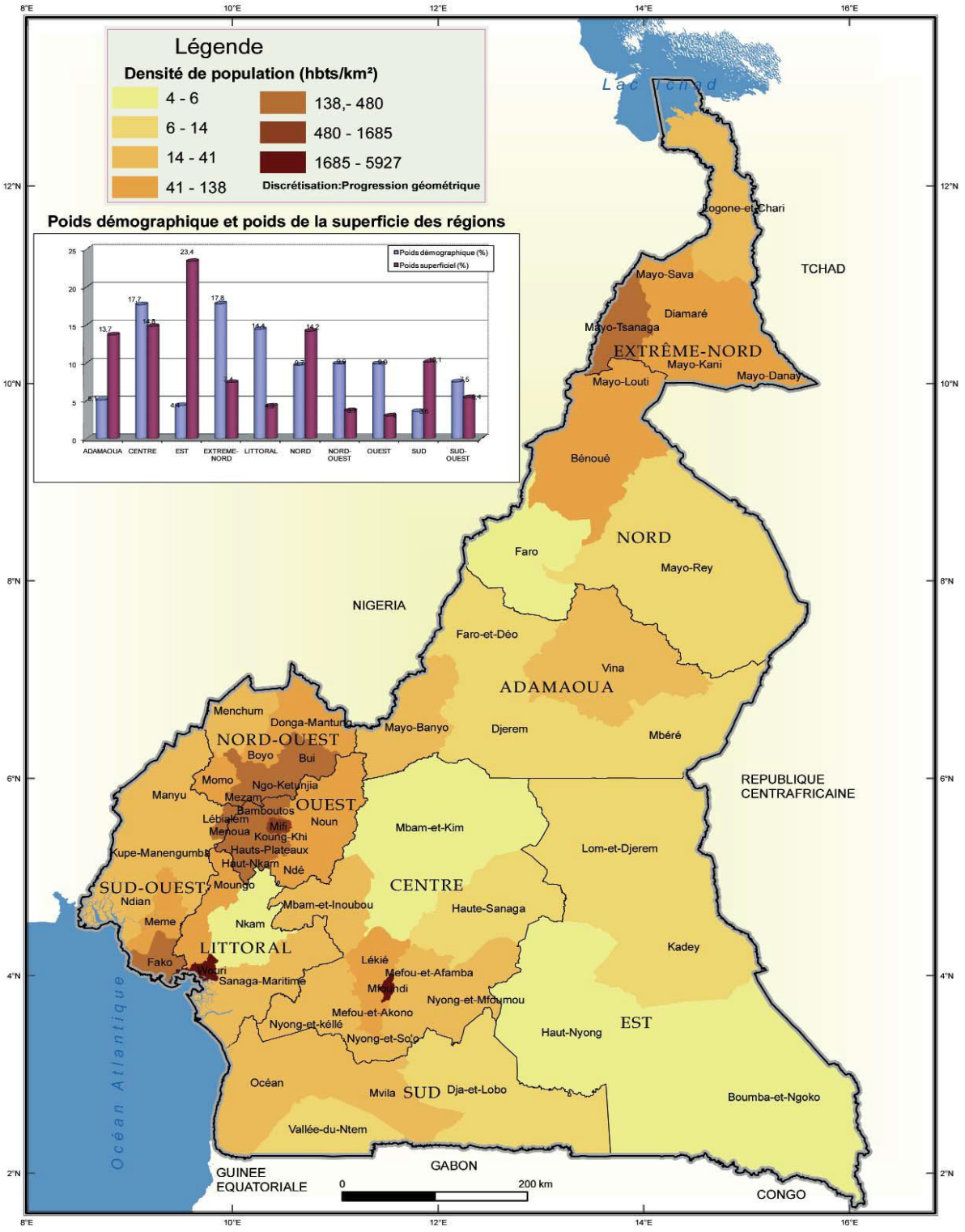
Source: cameroon*.opendataforafrica.org/.../****cameroon****-fao-stat*

Figure 6: Ethnic diversity in Cameroon



Source : Atlas National de développement physique du Cameroun

Figure 7: Population density map of Cameroon



Source : Atlas National de développement physique du Cameroun

0.6 Methods and presentation of thesis

The present study was carried out based on a limited number of case studies. During the discussions with my supervisors and the exploratory inquiry in Cameroon, three small towns were singled out for the case studies. The main criterion for the selection was the evolution of the water management system and of the maintenance schemes. It was decided that two of the chosen towns should be representative in the North West region (Anglophone region in Cameroon) with community-driven water systems and the third showing the other accessibility strategies found in many other small towns in the western region[7] (Francophone part of Cameroon).

The study is based on five and a half months of field research in Cameroon since we officially commenced our PhD thesis but with good prior knowledge of our study sites as we had been particularly interested in the domain of water management since our masters' research. The research followed mostly a qualitative approach and most of the data generated are of qualitative nature since an in-depth analysis of social processes and perceptions is needed. The research was conducted in three small towns of the Western Highlands of Cameroon while drawing some examples from other cases in North West, South West (Anglophone part of Cameroon).The present research is based on the results of the following social research methods and sources of secondary information: Participatory observation; this was done during field work, visited former Helvetas workers and their present activities which comprise of piloting NGOs involved in local water supplies in villages and small towns, training workshop for the members of the water boards and user associations with the Council, community meetings and individual contacts.

Meetings were held with community members in the two villages selected as case studies in the North West region. Professionals (mostly of foreign donors) moderated the meetings. The topics of the meetings followed a guide defined in advance in collaboration with the participating professionals. It consisted of many questions of which some were related to general aspects of the towns' history, their plans and perceptions of development. In a second part, history-related aspects and the main effects of the Drinking Water Systems (DWS) were discussed.

[7] Many studies (Ribot, 2002 and Jaglin, 2005) show that the community model in local development seem to be more widespread in Anglophone than Francophone countries/regions, we deemed it interesting after discussions with our supervisor to test this view in Cameroon which presents both regions.

Individual in-depth interviews with many key persons were carried out in relation to the problems of water management: local authorities, members of Water Maintenance Committees (WMC), Village Development Associations (VDA), caretakers as well as members of Councils, manjong[8] or age-groups, co-operatives, warrior societies, dancing groups and religious groups. We participated in transect walk along the main infrastructure with the chief of customers' service and the technical engineer in Kumbo and Bali respectively. This walks through the catchment area and the standpipes gave us the opportunity to observe some central elements of the monitoring process itself as well. In addition, it permitted us to interview a great number and different categories of water users (young and old people, men and women). Questionnaires directed to the population and management bodies of Kumbo and Bali are attached as appendices. The Phase 1 questionnaire was sent to the 60 respondents who sent water rate information and also provided the name of contact persons whom they presumed were more "knowledgeable" about the water rates. One of the contact persons we later realized is the chief of customers' services of the Kumbo water supply. In Bali, we closely collaborated with the president of Bali Development and Cultural Association (BANDECA) who also put us in contact with one of his technical engineers with whom we visited the catchment sites and purification centre.

The two-phase survey of the Kumbo, Bali and Bafou water systems provided information about the existing and historical water rates in all three sites and additional information about the rate making practices for other systems in the Western Highlands of Cameroon. These three sites appear to be representative of the type of water systems present in the area and the analysis that is presented in the following chapter should be relevant to the water systems throughout the country.

We gathered additional valuable information from abundant written documents of former Helvetas and some very helpful documentation (appendix 1). facilitated by the management board (Kumbo) and user association (in Bali) of the villages we visited Other important sources of information were the friendly and constructive discussions held with some

[8]These are village secret societies which highly participate in major decision taking activities of the community. They are based in the chief's palace; indirectly meaning the chiefs influence in local development. There exist other major secret societies "*takenbeng*" and "*kwifon"* in the ngemba communities, *"nwerong"* in Nso. They are considered as the chief's councillors.

members of the teams of Plan International[9] and former Helvetas (NGO) workers in Cameroon.

Whilst the approach in Kumbo and Bali were similar, we adopted a very different strategy in Bafou. Within the framework of a cooperation project that took place between the University of Toulouse II and the University of Dschang in Cameroon (CORUS), I was part of the team of researchers. I used the data collected within this project which I greatly enriched during my two field trips to Cameroon and adapted to meet the demands of this study. Data was also collected through a guided interview (appendix 2) which we used to inquire on water sources and uses through a door to door visit in Bafou in 2007 and later on Bandjoun in 2008. In Kumbo and Bali, interviews were directed to targeted groups which included management committees and water providers, water users etc.

Focus Group Discussion (FGDs)[10] were used to collect information from some water management committees from the two towns (Kumbo and Bali). Checklist questions (Appendix 1) were formulated and used during the FGDs. Management committees, and other people who partake in the management of water schemes in the villages (setting water tariffs, planning, Operation and Maintenance (O&M) and monitoring of the water systems of the water infrastructures), were included in the study to get different views on how they work. In the Kumbo and Bali, FGDs aimed at getting views of the management committees on how they manage their schemes, general water demand compared to supply in the village, water rating criteria, how operation and maintenance activities are done and how communities perceive community managed water supply and sanitation schemes. We considered other important issues for discussion such as transparency of management committees, how information circulates on income and expenditure, the suitability of water technology in place and the reasons they decided to have that technology and management strategies to ensure long term sustainability of the schemes. Others were trainings received in relation to water supply and sanitation issues. The Focus Group Discussions also aimed to collect the views of

[9] Plan International is an NGO that encourages girl education. After much experience in many African societies this NGO is aware that one of the main hindrances to the girl child education is the fact that she has to fetch water for domestic use. As a result, they are engaged in providing potable water in order to enable the children to go to school.

[10] Focus Group Discussions were working sessions we organized with different groups of persons based on their meeting calendar. The aim was to meet a large number of persons within the short time we were to stay on our fields. We mainly used this method to gather information from members using common water points during their meetings in different quarters.

the management committees on what should be done for water and sanitation schemes to make them sustainable under community management. For Kumbo and Bali water schemes, FGDs aimed at gathering the views of management committees on what they see as the benefit of community managed water schemes, community participation and their management strategies to ensure long term sustainability of the water schemes.

Focus Group Discussions were used because they help the researcher to gather large amounts of information in a short time, they also enable the researcher to meet more people and save time compared to structured questionnaire surveys. However, the method is reported to demand high skills of the moderator to control the group discussion. Other disadvantages of FGDs are small sample of participants which might not be representative of the whole population, it generates large quantities of information which might be difficult to analyze, more outspoken individuals can dominate the discussion and more planning is required prior to FGDs. Despite the drawbacks of this method, it is a method which allows in-depth study of the problem in question. I think I managed to control the discussion and manage outspoken individuals in order to have representation from all the participants.

In all three study areas, transect walks were undertaken with members of the Water User Associations (WUAs), in order to identify areas and sites, in or adjacent to water courses, that were considered important in terms of religious and cultural practices. These transect walks were also important in validating the data from the discussions. Following these walks, important sites where cultural practices and religious ceremonies were practiced, were identified. This information was then discussed and verified with a broader group of Water User Associations (WUAs) participants, including interim WUA committee members, at workshops held in Kumbo and Bali WUAs. Semi-structured interviews were also conducted with key stakeholders involved in water provision and management in the study area (Appendix 2). The interviews focused largely on investigating the role played by traditional leaders and other functionaries, customary rules and cultural practices in historic and existing water management institutions in the case study areas.

Water providers are the institutions, NGOs and other sectors who are involved in water and sanitation provision in these areas. To get information from water providers, interviews were carried out with organizations dealing with water provision in Kumbo and Bali regions. We aimed at collecting views from water providers on issues related to approaches and

management strategies employed by water development schemes in sub urban areas and management plans for sustainability of the schemes. The way local communities are taken into consideration when planning water projects (planning, implementation, management and monitoring). Constraints facing water providers concerning participation of local communities in project activities, community empowerment to run the project (technical, financial and institutions), the way operations and maintenance activities is done and the management strategies to ensure sustainability of the projects under management of the local communities were also considered important.

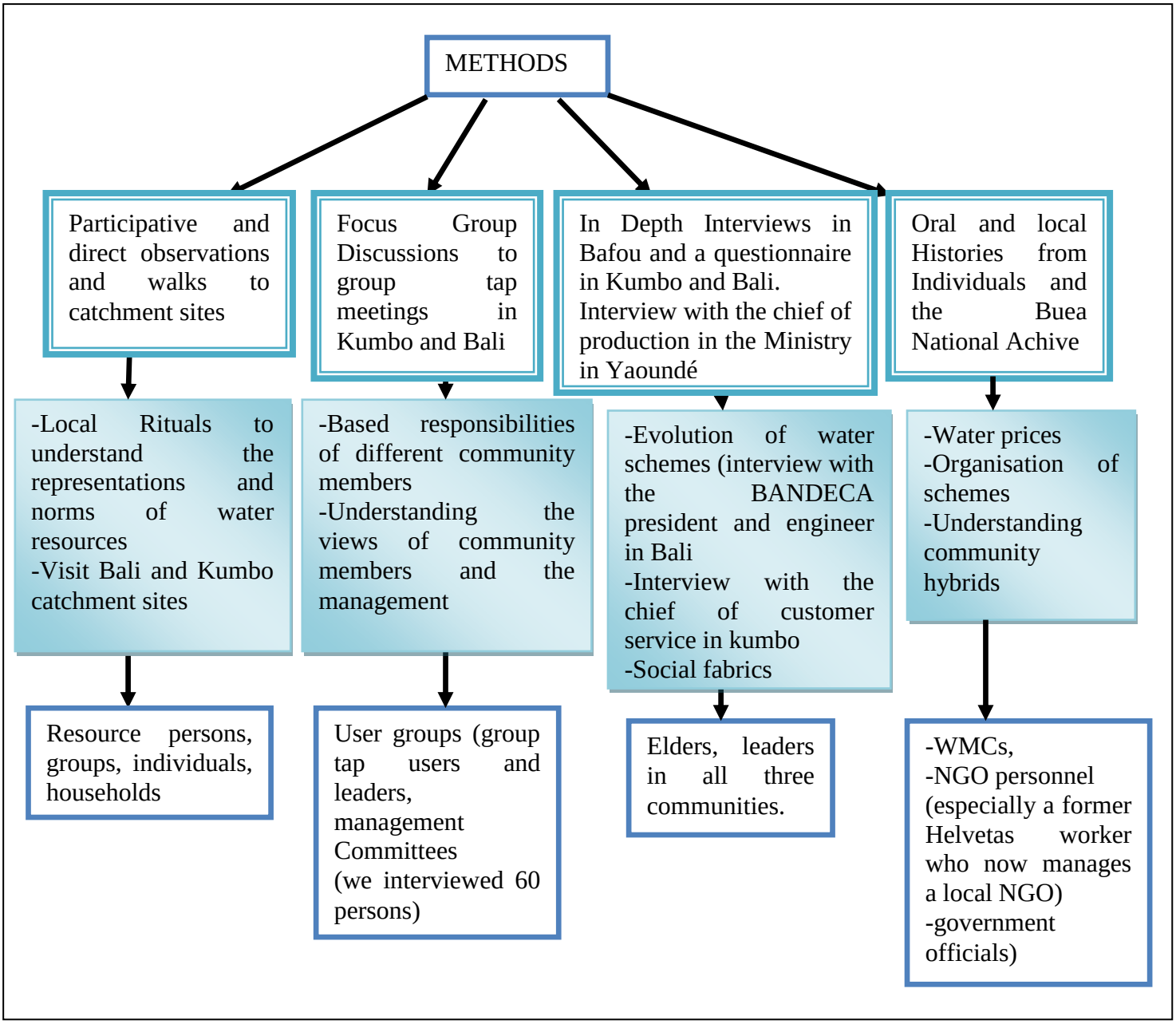
The analysis of the information collected was done while taking into consideration lots of valuable suggestions, criticisms and hints received from professionals and my academic supervisors. After situating our study within a much larger context and identifying our problem statement, we later partitioned our work into three different parts.

0.7 The Structure of the thesis

In Part I, there is a history of potable water supplies in Cameroon (Chapter 1) with particular focus on the actors and institutions that existed, who benefited from the systems, who financed the constructions and how maintenance was carried out. In subsequent sections (Chapter 2) we analyse the present structures that operate in the Cameroon water sector, the national and international policies that affect water governance and the main actors. In Part II of the thesis the focus is on the theoretical framework. Based on the institutional and jurisdictional fragmentation of the Cameroon water sector and its complex society we considered two concepts that explain best the water situation. Consequently we theorize the main concepts ('governance' in Chapter 3 and 'community' in Chapter 4) chosen to guide our reflection within this study. It is argued that the water management of local water supplies in Cameroon should incorporate the diversity that exists in our communities. In the last part of this dissertation (Part III), we adopt a case study approach where we present the challenges the community-driven models can pose with concrete examples from Cameroonian societies in general and the study sites in particular. Chapter 5 looks specifically at questions of infrastructure and access in each case study. It also sets out the role played by chiefs and elites and discusses the way water is used to express political grievances. Chapter 6 looks at the public-community approach as a model of hybrid governance. It also covers the question of project evaluation and the possivbility of using 'willingness to pay' as a proxy for success.

Chapter 7 looks at the role in each case study of different actors and institutions. It gives attention to the possibility of reducing the role of chiefs and balancing 'custom' with statute law more effectively. It also looks at the process of price-setting. Ultimately, we analyze the complexity of communities in relation to the conception and application of efficient (unique if possible) water governance patterns in the management of community water supplies.

Figure 8: Summary of Research methods



PART I

EVOLUTION OF THE POTABLE WATER SECTOR, ACTORS AND INSTITUTIONS IN CAMEROON

Introduction to part I

The thesis is organized into three parts; this first part has two chapters. It has two main objectives; firstly, it gives a background to water management and community approaches of Francophone and Anglophone Cameroon and also explains one of the research assumptions and objectives.

The first chapter serves as an introduction to the thesis by outlining water as a multifaceted resource in pre-colonial Cameroon, and its relationship with society portraying many dimensions, such as cultural, spiritual and symbolic meanings for local communities, apart from economic significance. And through social institutions, water was controlled and regulated in pre-colonial Cameroon. On the other hand water in colonial Cameroon was not seen as having multidimensional meanings. Therefore, introducing an economic dimension by colonialists undermines its embeddedness in the everyday symbolic, cultural and social contexts within which communities live their lives. This to us seems to be one of the main problems of water governance in Cameroon as we will illustrate in subsequent chapters of this research work.

We also give a review of the spatial and temporal management of water in Cameroon by the different colonial powers. It also explains how community as an institution has managed potable water systems in the historical context, from pre- to post-colonial Cameroon, how the concept of community management has disintegrated over time and what attempts have been made to revive the institutions for community water management – and how far they have been successful. This chapter further argues that water management in Cameroon is a long affair and how the relative success of community-based water management in Anglophone Cameroon has its roots in the colonial era as well as socio-cultural factors.

Finally, we reveal a gap in chapter two regarding understanding the ability of the present water sector presenting overlapping institutions. In view of these complexities, legislations and regulations put forth by the national and international institutions are hardly motivating for local actors. Conventional forms of legislation co-exist and interact with multiple legal orders such as customary, religious, project and local laws - all of which provide the basis for actors to claim access to water. These multiple legal institutions existing at various levels in the social spectrum help actors to shuffle between one and another of these legal frameworks

to access water. Essentially, institutions through which these legal forms are negotiated and renegotiated are crucial for effective water governance.

CHAPTER 1

WATER GOVERNANCE IN CAMEROON: FOOTPRINTS OF THE COLONIALISTS

Introduction

The historical evidence supports both the notion that there was a wide range of different types of colonization and that the presence or absence of European settlers was a key determinant of the form development took. Water had always been a multifaceted resource in pre-colonial Cameroon, and its relationship with society has had many dimensions, such as cultural, spiritual and symbolic meanings for local communities, apart from economic significance. Therefore, simply viewing water through an economic lens can undermine its embeddedness in the everyday symbolic, cultural and social contexts within which communities live their lives. And through social institutions, water was controlled and regulated in pre-colonial Cameroon.

This chapter will survey the human dimension in the history of water governance in Cameroon, to discover the various institutional aspects of the governance concept. We already find primitive forms of water governance (source protection and water drainage) in the pre colonial era. These were community initiatives which still exist in some localities till date. Water governance in a more centralized form appeared with the colonial era, with the introduction of water laws and the gradual change of water status. It was the start of the development of a public domain, which mostly dealt with the engineering of large water works.

In the 1960s there was need to review the approaches of the two development strategies applied by the French and the British. New stakeholders entered the arena around water policy making, which politicized water engineering. Since then, other dimensions of water governance became more apparent. In the 1990s society became aware of the limits to human control. These dimensions (the entry of new actors with different interests) of water governance point out several institutional aspects of the governance concept that we will elaborate on in chapter 2. It is a useful tool to chapter 3 of this dissertation in which we deal with a more specific elaboration of the governance concept.

In this chapter bringing in the historical setting of water governance is for three broad reasons. Firstly the Western Highland region of Cameroon as a consequent reaction to the incapability of the state to solve their water needs has developed diverse local initiatives. Apparently, the methods opted for by the Western Region (Francophone section) as a means to meet their water needs are quite different to those adopted in the North West and South West regions. In addition, the North West region (Anglophone) presents a very high number of community water supplies as oppose to the apparently lesser number in the Western Francophone Region. This situation constitutes one of the reasons for the choice of this study area. The question that comes to mind is why so much divergence within a region (the Western Highlands of Cameroon) with a relatively homogenous physical and cultural environment? Consequently one of the major hypotheses guiding this study is that colonial development strategies and policies left prints in the two regions (Lee and Schultz, 2011). Secondly, a flashback in the history of water governance is to understand the evolution of water rights and societal behavior as well as institutions.

Water management today in Cameroon cannot be successfully analysed based on contemporary issues as many important aspects will be left out and our assumptions could render coherency quite difficult to readers. Since we assume that past actors and institutions have had much influence on management ideologies there is need for a flashback. Even though the present actors in Cameroon are almost the same since the 70s there exist nevertheless differences in the evolution of community development or community water supply in the two regions. For this reason, the evolution of potable piped water supply will be treated separately from community development.

1.1 Customary laws guiding water management: in the past and present

The traditional African societies were strongly animist before the spread of Islam and Christianity. The animist religion is based on natural elements, among which water. These traditional societies have their own vision of water, which differs from the state vision of water. Water is used with a religious sense by the customers in order to evoke the spirits of the dead so that they watch over the community. As an element in the democratization process that occurred during the 1990s and even before, most African countries have established a legislative system governing various branches of industry, including water. Cameroon elaborated and implemented a law concerning the Land and Property Reform (state law) clearly defining the water rights and the role of the State as the owner of some water

resources. In this section we will be bringing out the simple norms that guide water resources from pre colonial times till date. Secondly how the divergences between customary (water considered as a social good, mediating spot with ancestors, source of life) and statutory laws (water gaining economic status) hinder water governance in Cameroon. In view of this, Kuitche (2007)[11] argues as summarized below:

Box 4: Representations to water in the Cameroon Western Highlands

In what concerns the customary rules to good water governance, Kuitche (2007) elaborates on the representations of water sources in Cameroon. He highlights the fact that water supply sources situated in places considered as sacred pose a serious problem to their efficient management since most of those sacred places are forbidden to inhabitants. A concrete example of the values accorded to water or water supply sources could be cited where during my master's research works on the field I never succeeded to map out the exact demarcated catchment zone. This zone after a tribal war between Nkwen (my study site) and Bambili a neighbouring village, the former threatened poisoning and destroying the catchment site and immediate action had to be taken where the secret society had to remove demarcations thus hiding the water source from their enemies. Other examples he cites go a long way to disqualify the economic value of water as it is regarded in most communities as an entirely social good, a situation which clearly explains why most catchment areas are freely ceded by their owners for catchment protection measures. It is also regarded very malicious he who poisons somebody through water.

Cultural and religious practices relevant to water management

The general perception about traditional structures is an image of institutions whose norms, values and internal organization date back hundreds of years. While this may be true in some cases, traditional societies, like all societies, inevitably change over time. We often do not have historical data on these structures, especially when there are no written documents. This lack of historical data and processing due to internal and external pressure make it difficult to accurately determine what is really "modern" and what is "traditional." However in the case of Cameroon, the enforcement of customary laws lie in the hands of customary institutions. The most powerful customary institution that regulates access and control to natural resources is the village head (the *Fon* and his entourage, what we will develop in this study as "chieftaincy"). This is a very important and respected village network in charge of legislation

[11] while presenting his paper; "Les représentations autours de l'eau au Cameroun" in a monthly water conference organized in the University of Dschang, Cameroon

and adjudication. Either the quarter head or a chief organizes meetings when an important event happens that needs attention.
One of the main reasons to incorporate traditional structures is to improve local governance, particularly in countries where decentralization attempts to establish strong structures at the local level have failed. Another strong reason is that many policies have not been implemented because traditional structures have been excluded, or because they have resisted some of these policies. To compare the governance of traditional authorities and the state administrations, we will be defining the term governance and principles of governance in chapter 3.

The source of the legitimacy of traditional leaders is historical, and often goes back to the pre-colonial period. They are usually considered not only as political authorities, but also as religious authorities, or as the "fathers" and "mothers" of a company. Authorities / traditional leaders can claim special legitimacy in the eyes of their people because they can be regarded as incarnations of history, culture, laws and values, religion, and even the remains of the pre-colonial sovereignty of their people.

In many traditional communities, there is little or no individual land or water ownership. The allocation of communal land to individuals and the rights and duties related to the allocation of resources is part of the functions of traditional authorities. Quarter heads present problems and give their views and finally the chiefs give a final decision based on the views of the majority. During the time of water scarcity, communities reinforce rules that regulate the amount of water drawn in public and private water sources. For example, in dry seasons, when water is scarce, the norm is that the little water is shared by everyone. At this time, communities practice rationing for each household. The village elders make the decision regarding water management rules and then the villagers are in charge of monitoring the water source and making sure that the rules are followed.

Most people in the community cooperate with their quarter heads to monitor those who break rules. Defaulters could face serious public humiliation, sanctions or fines for minor offences. For serious or repeated offences ostracism is used or the individual sent on exile. Quarter and village meetings can be held to organize communal work for water development and management. Those who do not take part are fined. Rules for managing water sources are

made by the chief and his counselors and made public through town criers. Customary laws related to equitable water access are mainly for natural and undeveloped water sources.

Religious and Cultural practices such as initiation ceremonies and baptism were practiced and still go on till date as we observed in all three study sites. We learned from respondents that some water sources are still considered as secret and set aside for the ancestors on particular days which they believe their ancestors come out to collect food and water. Consequently, these sites are protected and access to the community restricted. Respondents also revealed that water plays a crucial part in curing illnesses, the expulsion of evil spirits and removing bad luck. Hence water is vital in the belief of certain individuals in the community. It nourishes both the body and the spirit. Even though the water policy does not intend to disrupt religious and cultural practices, it is crucial that these practices are acknowledged by local management structures so as to avoid disturbance of the socio-cultural fabric of these communities.

The communities still perform traditional rituals especially before the planting season and at the end of the year (especially in preparation for the annual dance which takes place in Bali), and before the celebration of the funeral of *Fons* after every seven years in Kumbo. A good percentage of respondents had performed and still perform traditional rituals.

Traditional communities believe that water is owned by god; therefore, everyone has a right to access it. The practice of rituals was cited as a sign of obedience and respect to their ancestors. However, in all three sites that is Kumbo, Bali and Bafou during our field work there was evidence that cultural practices and values were gradually eroding. Respect for the spirits has greatly reduced with the invasion of more Western styles. The proximity of these areas to large urban areas and their rapid urbanization could be resulting in modern practices and behaviours infiltrating traditional ways of life.

We also realized that some streams, rivers and water sources and their surrounding area are considered dangerous if the traditional rules are neglected, especially if the river gods are angered. Community members also said that people do not mourn when such incidence happen because the ancestors have been angered. All they do to perform certain rituals to appease the ancestors so as to be able to least retrieve the drowned body. State intervention in such places meets with violent revolts as the communities are convinced that their ancestors are disturbed and could be rendered homeless which will result in many misfortunes in the

village like bad harvest, incurable diseases and the absence of rain. They also fear that state intrusion could eventually suppress their culture.

The community members of all three sites under study reported that traditional healers continue to play a significant and influential role in the community. For example, the traditional healers conduct ceremonies at certain sites along rivers, where they believe that the water spirits are present. There are occasions when secret societies, traditional healers and their followers spend days at these sites, communicating with the water spirits. The community members if anyone disappears at certain sites where the water spirits are believed to exist, the villagers and family members are not allowed to mourn. Sometimes the disappearance of some community members is attributed the fact that water spirits are imparting knowledge and skills to them and they will use them in healing. Near these water sites, there are certain plants which can be identified and used for healing purposes by traditional healers.

Today in reference to water schemes we realized customary laws are adjusting even though with much difficulty. Many traditional communities are losing their cultural and traditional practices and many especially the youth have repudiated them in favour of modern ways of living[12]. However, there were cultural and religious practices identified during the fieldwork which are still relevant to water management.

Development laws guiding schemes were reported to be enacted only by the local communities. Firstly, communities form groups and organize themselves to plant live or dead fences around water sources for example. The fences protect the water source from strong winds and animals that may destroy the pumps, sedimentation tanks, create a boundary and a land tenure mark for the area under protection. Secondly, each community has specific rules guiding its water source depending on the type (river, spring or wells).
Finally, communities call meetings to determine water prices[13] which differ in each community. However there exists a common point in all communities. On the other hand,

[12] Although we use the term "abandon" it depicts the reluctance of youth as concerns these practices. We realized that the older the age group the more attached they were to traditional practices relevant to water management

[13] It is worth noting that the monetary aspect of water only came about when communities started constructing small water schemes which needed some technical assistance beyond communities' capacity. Unlike meetings to set community work which were more regular, meetings for price setting depended on heavy repairs.

communities are hesitant to let go of their norms and practices and seem not to realize that water schemes today demand modern skills. Till date, customary laws exist and predominate in most communities. Hence recognizing and formalizing customary laws can help address the problem of a lack of human resources. We realized that customary laws and institutions are most influential in water access, allocation and settling water use disputes. For example, most laws enacted by communities are consistent with the customary laws and are focused on prevention of water pollution and abuse, and equitable water access as analyzed above. Customary laws are widely used and accepted in most communities in solving local water conflicts. There is a mastery of customary laws by communities perhaps due to the participatory nature of the population. Meanwhile people are unaware of statutory laws. Most disputes were and are still settled at quarter levels and customary institutions. Thus, local institutions for water management may be empowered and motivated to increase their participation and cooperation in achieving equity for access to water and prevention of water pollution as a way to reduce the cost of water management using statutory institutions.

Hence, it is important to consider these indigenous beliefs and practices and representations to water should be incorporated in management decisions relevant to the conservation and protection of water resources as they contribute to community's' spiritual life. Some of the violent reactions of these communities can find their explanations in their attachments to these areas and the disruption that can be caused by state interference. In reality, this statement remains only a simple claim, as a real juridical prerogative would not be accepted without great resistance by the customary water users. Effectively, what characterizes Cameroonian water law is the existence, parallel to written laws, a set of customary norms which originated largely prior to colonization. Worst still, as a result of its colonial heritage Cameroon has a plural legal system; the common law and the Penal Law in addition to customary laws. In a country where the majority of the population is ignorant of statutory laws, these norms tend to supplant the official written legislation in relation to the exploitation of the water resources by the local inhabitants. During our interviews, the traditional leaders affirmed that the state is powerless without those who know the true identity of the people. They therefore act as intermediaries between the population and the administration. Accounts from various leaders, go that no ambition of creating acceptable juridical norms can bypass the customary law.

Within the rural communities, chiefs/chieftaincy and their headmen were the main contact persons for the colonial government and any other outsiders intervening in issues concerning

water supply facilities. Specific tasks, such as the operation and maintenance of water supply systems were usually delegated to members of the Native Authority (NA), who then formed relevant committees in the village. However, during the colonial era, many of the traditional leaders were co-opted by the state or corrupted into furthering the aims of the colonial government. The ongoing dislocation of people disrupted traditional forms of governance and customary law. In many instances the traditional authorities were viewed as agents of the state (Nyamnjoh, 2004) facilitating the execution of policies and laws. However, despite the erosion and corruption of these traditional institutions, customary values and practices have persisted and in areas like Kumbo, Bafou and Bali, traditional institutions and management systems are still functional and respected.

Looking at the new legal framework governing water management in Cameroon, the role of traditional leaders is unclear. Chiefs/chieftaincy is the senior traditional leaders and their positions can only be occupied through inheritance. Quarter heads are elected and are mainly responsible for monitoring activities in the community and giving feedback to the chief. The national water act does not explicitly recognize customary water management structures, practices and laws in the present governance system. Although recognized by the Cameroonian Constitution, chiefs' authority and powers in terms of water management are not augmented by legislation. Furthermore, in cases of conflicts, the legislature suppresses existing customary law used by traditional leadership and amends it or replaces it by statutory legislation. This establishes the « superiority » of statutory law.

Colonial and post-colonial periods have influenced these traditional forms of legitimacy in different ways. During the colonial period, the legitimacy of traditional leaders has been strengthened[14]. Although the colonial authorities have the legitimacy of their authority over their own rights, culture, and use of a constitutional and legal based on the imperial power based order, they sometimes used the traditional chiefs as their local representatives (Cheka, 2007). In these cases, traditional leaders were equipped with the recognition and legitimacy of the colonizers at the same time they enjoyed those of their own people. Traditional leaders were responsible for managing natural resources such as water and administering other functions such as mediating conflicts and allocating land. In the next section we will be

[14] Confer part 3 chapter 6

dealing with the entering of the Germans, eventually the British and the French and how this disrupted the traditional water management institutions.

1.2 The footprints of colonial water governance in Cameroon (Germany, Britain and France)

This chapter is divided into three parts. It sets out the empirical base for a discussion of the history of water supply in Cameroon. This narrative is structured around a sequence of questions which seek to understand the cost and source (s) of funds and which institutions operated the piped water supplies? The answers to these questions are based on archival research in Cameroon and interviews with engineers and civil servants in Cameroon. Inevitably there are gaps and uncertainties in the answers.

The first section develops two different arguments which explore the political significance of water history. The second section will attempts an explanation of the hypothesis put forward in the problem statement; that of the adoption of the community approach by the two factions in Cameroon. It is built on the claim that the colonial period was of great significance in Cameroon, in particular to the development of community water supplies. Before our analysis of the evolution of the water management and community development in Cameroon it is necessary to make a brief flashback on the three colonial powers that influenced development in Cameroon.

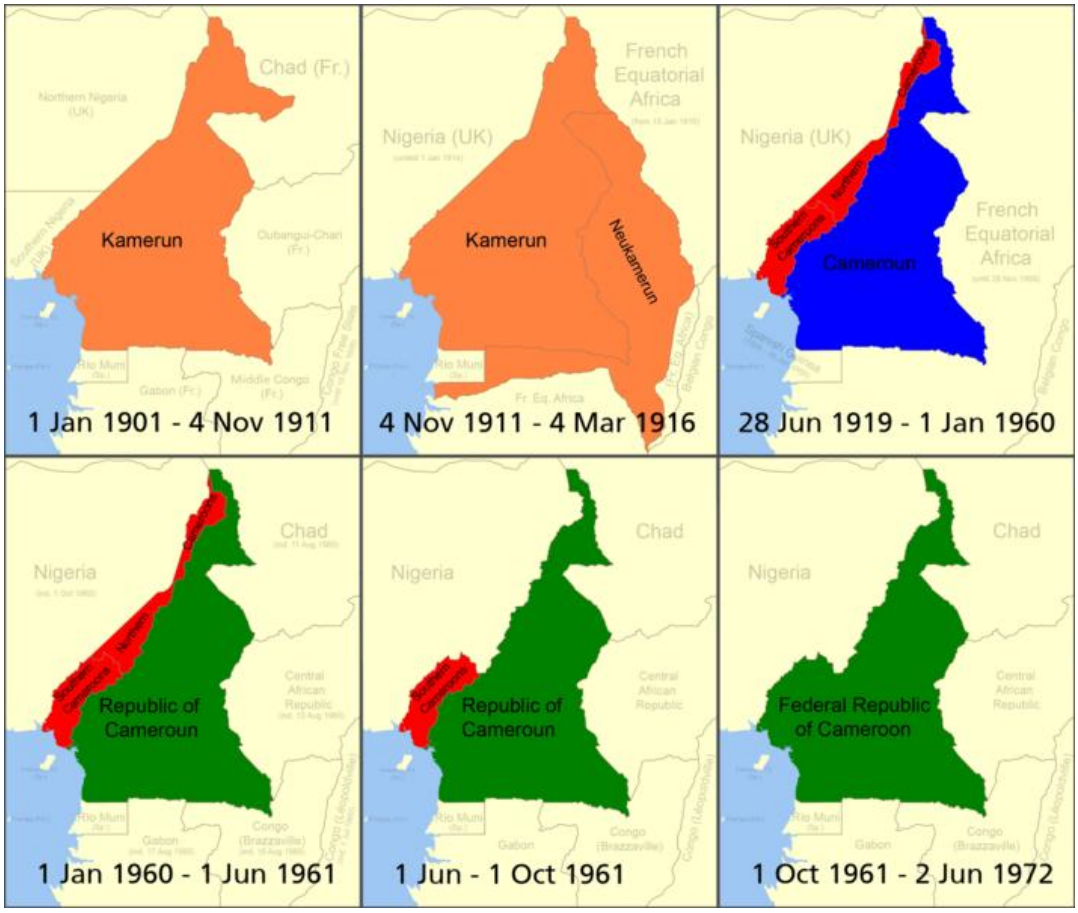
Flashback on the Colonial period and its impacts on local development

In the early 19th century there was considerable activity in Cameroon by the British and American missionaries, but a German connection began with the building of a ware house of the Woermann Company in 1868 on the estuary of the Wouri River in the Littoral region. Other German traders followed in sufficient numbers and made requests home for the appointment of a consul. Their hopes were met by Bismarck's dramatic decision to establish a German empire in Africa and thus signing treaties with local kings of Cameroon. Germans had difficulties in enforcing their authority over the colony. At the moment when Cameroon was fast becoming a state controlled administration, its existence as a German colony was brought to an abrupt end. (Maps 1 and 2 on fig 9, from left to right).

French and British control started with the break of the First World War in 1914 with Britain and France aligning against Germany. The two German colonies (Togoland and Cameroon)

on the Gulf of Guinea were sandwiched between British and French colonies. By early 1916 Britain and France were in control of both German colonies. The two allies divided Togo and Cameroon between them administering the regions adjacent to their own colonies. In the treaty of Versailles, in 1919, Germany renounced sovereignty over her African colonies. The issue of who should rule them was referred to the League of Nations. Cameroon was placed under French and British mandates and the already established division between Britain and France was also confirmed. The British share consisted of two disconnected strips of land North and South of Cameroon which became known as the British Cameroons sharing common borders with their Nigerian colony in the West (green section on Figure 9 below). This division remained until the plebiscite of 1961, which led to reunification first as a Federation and, after 1972 as a unitary state.

Figure 9: The bright red section of the third map (from left to right) was the parts under the British mandate from 1915-1961. The section in purple on the same map was the part occupied by the French from 1915 to 1960. The map on the right is the present map of Cameroon after the 1961 plebiscite.



Source: *www.worldatlas.com › Africa*

The French side (the blue section on map 3 from left to right) constitutes the Eastern part of Cameroon. From 1956 the French were confronted by a powerful uprising orchestrated by a nationalist party, the UPC (Union des Population du Cameroun), demanding immediate independence. When independence was granted in 1960, the question remained as to the future of the British Cameroons. Should they be merged with Nigeria or to the already independent Cameroon Republic? The question was put to plebiscite in 1961. The Northern region voted to join Nigeria and the Southern region opted for the Republic of Cameroon on a federated basis. (Figure 9) The new nation became known as the Federal Republic of Cameroon and finally the Republic of Cameroon in 1972. After highlights on the history of Cameroon we will be analyzing how the different colonial powers participated in local development. Specifically we will be examining if the community approach of development has its origin in history or rather on the cultural organization of communities.

1.2.1 Slow but sure German development period: the first piped water systems in Cameroon

Anglophone Cameroon comprises the North West and South West regions of the country's western border with Nigeria (See Fig 3). Within both provinces, there are particular places where the lack of a suitable drinkable water supply was a limiting factor on pre colonial settlements and later on urban growth. Nevertheless, relative to many other regions of Cameroon and indeed much of sub Saharan Africa, these two regions have abundant water resources.

For the purpose of this study, history is assumed to begin in 1902[15] when the German colonial state built the first piped water supplies. At its maximum extent the German colony of Kamerun occupied an area larger than the current country of Cameroun (See figure 3 above), however, the most intensely colonized area was on the coast between Victoria (present day Limbe; See figure 4 below), Buea and Douala (Ngoh, 1987). Above the mangroves this coastal strip was transformed into a sequence of plantations, initially developed largely through private capital.

[15] This is the period where the first piped water supplies can be traced.

Figure 10: Major towns mentioned in the South West Region

Source: Ngefor G.S., 2013

The story of piped water in this part of Cameroon begins in Victoria (Limbe) in 1902 and evolves from there. This chapter will follow that evolution in chronological fashion broadly following the account given by Page (2000). Victoria was the administrative and commercial centre of the colonial state and the major port. There were schools in the town and a botanic garden[16] on the banks of the River Limbe, where the Germans experimented with the introduction of new crops from their other tropical colonies. The water supply was fed from a spring source and used gravity to distribute the water around the town. The water system supplied German colonial officers, Christian missions and some businesses. However there was only one tap for Africans.

[16] The Limbe Botanical garden is still existing

Buea, which is inland and at a much higher altitude, was the official capital of the German colony from 1898 to 1909 (Rudin 1938). It had about 1500 inhabitants in 1900 (Courade, 1972). The cool climate in Buea was preferred by officials to the temperatures a thousand metres lower in Victoria or Douala. However, despite being the capital, it was a smaller town than Victoria because it served a purely administrative function. It was the focus for government investment in infrastructure with the construction of offices and homes for colonial staff. The piped water supply system which supplied German colonial Buea was constructed between 1900 and 1903 (Page 2000: 99) for German official's domestic needs with most of the construction material paid for by the German colonial state. But the systems were constructed using the forced labour of Cameroonians. For example the sand, cement and cast iron pipes were head loaded up from the port at Victoria to the building site in Buea 1100m above sea level. The system used the Musole stream and used a slow sand filter to supply the German settlement. As in Limbe there was a single tap for the local population, as well as ornamental fountains and a ceremonial public drinking fountain decorated with a medallion showing Bismarck (which continued to work til the 1980s). Both Limbe and Buea predate the construction of any piped water supply in Douala, which was begun in 1911 (Page 2000: 101). This was because these were the most important cities and because the mountains meant it was easy to use gravity to supply water. Douala, in contrast, depends on saline, unreliable wells for water.

Apart from the colonial government engagement in the construction of water supplies the Missions and plantations also participated in water development. Any development that occurred was a by-product of profit (Hancock, 1942). Nonetheless at very local levels, the family, interfamily and village settings, the pre-colonial trappings of mutual assistance through self-help persisted for the construction of some water points and for providing other socially felt needs. Church organizations also participated with community members for the building of potable water supplies such as the Bojongo and Nyassoso water supplies in 1916 (Page, 2000: 102). This was followed by many other small potable water construction works in Buea.

Following a short military campaign in 1915, the French became the colonial administration in Cameroon east of the River Mungo, whilst the British controlled the area to the West. The territory which now forms Anglophone Cameroon was known by the British as the Southern Cameroons and though officially a League of Nations Mandate, was in effect governed as an extension of the Eastern Provinces of the colony of Nigeria. The principal official in

Cameroon (the Resident) was answerable to Lieutenant-Governors in Enugu and the Governor-General in Lagos. They did repair the system in Limbe because it was used by the Navy (Page, 2000, 109). However, after the First World War ended the trend changed. The first government engineers arrived in the early 1920, and the Public Works Department (PWD) took over the operation of the water systems in Buea and Victoria in 1921 (Page 2000: 109). But it was not until 1926, ten years after assuming control that any technical staff from the Public Works Department visited Bamenda, the main settlement in the North West region (Page 2000: 97).

The German water supplies in Victoria and Buea were used largely unaltered by the British colonial staff for many years to come. As a British newspaper put it in 1915, "*Luckily, the Cameroons itself is thoroughly up to date in this respect; the Germans have spent more on their public works than we should ever dream of doing*." (Morning Post, cited in Page 2000: 96). This is of interest to us in that the British gave the impression of admiration for German development and its implication for Cameroonian development. However, it is hard to define the German development policy in Cameroon and their prints were wiped off during the French and British period which according to us had a greater impact in infrastructural development.

1.2.2 Centralization and dependency as a French legacy in Francophone Cameroon

"*Colonial institutions are thought to be an important determinate of post-independence levels of political stability, economic growth, and public goods provision*" (Lee and Schultz, 2011:94). In particular, some scholars have suggested that British institutional and cultural legacies are more conducive to post independence growth than those of France or other colonizers. "*Systematic tests of this hypothesis are complicated by unobserved heterogeneity among nations due to variable pre- and post-colonial histories*" (Lee and Schultz, 2011: 95). In this subsection we focus on Cameroon, which includes regions colonized by both Britain and France, and use the different colonial policies administered to explain the relative success of community development. The evidence suggests that Anglophone Cameroonian communities have stronger local institutions than their Francophone brothers and sisters because of colonial backgrounds.

Several developments of the immediate post war period were to be of fundamental importance in determining the framework within which the relationship between France and Cameroon would evolve. This included constitutional changes concerning French Africa embodied in the constitution of the Fourth Republic. The 1946 French Constitution stated that Cameroon was to be an "associate territory" (*territoire associé)* within the French union; although Cameroon was to be placed under the trusteeship of the United Nations. Such arrangements insured France's direct rule of Cameroon and gave it the opportunity to adjust the orientation of the territory's economic policy. Even though we could not lay hands on France's policy as concerns water development in Cameroon we can understand the evolution of this sector within the general socio economic development policy. We will base our analysis on the law of 30th April 1946, by which the French National Assembly established a long term program for the development and modernization of the French overseas territories entitled le *Fonds d'Investissement pour le Développement Economique et Social des Territories d'Outre-Mer* (CCFOM) (Lee and Schultz, 2011). During this period which is of particular interest to us in this study, these funds were to be employed in Cameroon in two economic plans, the 1947-1953 plan and the 1953-1957 plan.

We should recall that our argument in this section of the work is that French development policy (or colonial policies in Cameroon) has been a colonial legacy that operates primarily through central government institutions even when dealing with local institutions (both formal and informal) in Cameroon. The essence of this analysis is to transfer this idea in the water sector. In Cameroon the different ideologies as concerns the management of community water supplies as it applies to Francophone and Anglophone Cameroon can be directly linked to the French policy of assimilation by which Africans who had received western education ("*évolués"*) were granted French citizenship so the French were too closely involved and had invested more in Cameroon. While France treated its colonies as part of its territory with well defined development plans funded by the *Fonds d'Investissement pour le Développement Economique et Social* (FIDES), the British policy aimed at economizing on money and manpower. In addition an assessment of the public investment shows the favored status of Cameroon relative to other overseas public investments by France (Lee and Schultz, 2011). Because of the diverse sources of investment, funds employed during this period vary greatly. In any case, a reasonable estimate of the FIDES and CCFOM investment in Cameroon from 1947 to 1955 is 90.1 billion French francs, far beyond the figures in British Cameroon (Lee and Schultz, 2011: 92). This investment figures were almost as great as that of the entire

French Equatorial Africa. In fact it amounted to 17 percent of the total sum invested overseas by FIDES and CCFOM during this period. From this figures put forward by Lee and Schultz (2011: 92) we can deduce that not only was the French policy paternalistic in nature, investments in Cameroon reduced the need for local community initiatives in this part of the country. Hence, whilst the British policy had that double aim of reducing cost and developing local initiatives, the French policy greatly invested in Cameroon and encouraged dependence.

Overall, it can be said that Cameroon enjoyed a "most favored nation status" in black Africa relative to other overseas colonies. French investment and British lack of investment in Cameroon can be viewed as creating a geographical imbalance within the economy (Lee and Schultz, 2011). Nevertheless while some argue that this generosity was beneficial, others consider it as a "Pandora's box" ("*cadeau empoisonné"*). Since our interest was to show how both the French and British colonial policies remain legacies in Cameroon's contemporary development we will not analyze the reasons behind their choices. In order to understand the French policy, it's important to put it side by side that of the British as we will be analyzing in the next section.

1.2.3 Community contributions to British government investment in water in Cameroon

Cameroonian communities always had to make financial contributions to British colonial projects. The British colonial officials expressed a vague desire to extend water supplies in Cameroon but were only prepared to support schemes if Cameroonians were willing to generate both the capital costs of construction (usually by the Native Authority[17]) and also agree on paying ongoing water rates. In addition, Native Authorities (acting like local councils) were expected to pay an annual charge to the Public Works Department (PWD) for the maintenance of water supplies. Taps never existed in areas that were not able or "willing" to pay water charges. In Buea town for example there were no taps in Stranger Quarter before 1938 (Page 2000: 113).

[17] The British colonial policy of Indirect Rule worked with local authorities like chiefs in regions where they existed like the North region of Cameroon. In the South west region which is relatively less hierarchical they put in place intermediaries. These middlemen had to collect taxes and manage local development. These individuals gradually became institutions and many were maintained as present day municipalities.

In Victoria progress appeared slightly faster. By 1930 the Cameroonian community of Victoria was supplied by three standpipes in New Town which had been constructed using funds provided by the Native Authority in addition to the original German tap (Page 2000: 111). However, by 1933 none of these new stand posts was functioning and the vast majority of the inhabitants were using two unprotected springs to the east of the town as their supply of water. Occasionally boreholes were drilled by the PWD and hand pumps installed for the use of Africans in settlements where the water resources were particularly bad, for example at Tiko in 1934, but both staff shortages and a lack of equipment meant that such initiatives were very infrequent.

The Second World War was a key turning point for water construction in Anglophone Cameroon. Before the War the main constraints on developing water supplies were a lack of skilled engineers and capital. Plans to build water supplies in Tombel, Bamenda and Kumba in the 20s and 30s were never realised. In 1944 a survey revealed that there were still no pipes in Bamenda, Kumba, Mamfe, Muyuka, Tiko and Tombel (Page 2000: 118-119). However after 1945 things began to change: firstly there was usually at least one engineer dedicated to water supplies in the PWD. Secondly, new construction work began starting with Bamenda in 1947. In the early 50's a series of towns and villages had government built supplies (Table 2).

Table 2: Construction work on water supplies 1950-1952 (Page, 2000, 129)

Place	Work carried out
Tiko	4 new deep wells
Bamenda	New reservoir tank and an extension of the pipeline
Bambui	Survey, design and construction of a pipe network
Mamfe	Construction of spring catchments
Kembong	Construction of two deep wells
Lisoka	Construction of rainwater catchment tank
Mpundu/Moli/Missellele	Construction of spring catchments
Bali	Survey and design of a pipe network

In the second half of the 1950s more money started to become available as independence was approaching, but community contributions to capital costs were still expected. In 1954 Cameroon became a semi-autonomous federal territory within Nigeria and the first Development Plan for the Cameroons was prepared. The bulk of the money requested in the Development Plan was spent on roads, but £50,000 was earmarked for water supplies, £29,000 for Kumba, Tombel and Wum and £21,000 for other supplies (Page 2000: 156). The

development plan ran from 1955-60, and was partly funded by grants and loans from Britain and partly from SATA/Helvetas. But crucially much of the money was found locally either from the taxes raised by Native authorities or from the revenues of the nationalized plantation (Cameroon Development Corporation). Any funds coming from the British government were only added after the community had done their best to raise local funds for development in total 36% of funds were raised locally at the end of the 50s (Table 3). This was a real British development policy which aimed at developing a sense of ownership to community members.

Table 3: Total Public Works Department (PWD) expenditure divided by source of capital (Page, 2000, 169)

Year	South Cameroons Administration (CDC profits)	Federal Republic of Nigeria (Grants and loans)	Colonial Development and Welfare Fund (Grants from British parliament)	Native authorities and Other Non Governmental bodies (taxes
1958	£174,745 21%	£379,975 45%	£273,038 32%	£14,252 2%
1959	£304,363 30%	£309,651 31%	£392,544 39%	£2,105 0%
1960	£401,479 44%	£123,098 14%	£288,376 32%	£91,508 10%
Total	880,587 32%	812,724 29%	953,958 35%	107,865 4%

From Table 2 it is evident that no major piped water supplies were put in place before 1955. It is obvious that it was not sufficient. Table 3 also shows us the financial participation of the different sources. An interesting remark is the participation of the community through the Native Authorities even though, at the time, their income was reducing and they were incurring debts and therefore considering making women eligible for tax (Page, 2000: 163). Generally, although the percentage is small it is evident they partook in local development and between 1958 and 1960 their contribution moved from 2 percent to 10 percent. One can conclude that the communities were increasingly included in development.

Table 4: Construction and capital costs of water supplies during the British colonial period (Page 2000: 170).

	Date of construction	Initial capital cost (£)	Target annual renewal contribution
Victoria	c.1903		
Buea	c.1904		
Bamenda (hospital)	1945-1947	3000	
Bambui	1954-55	9,050	402
Bamenda (extension)	1955-56	11,700	384
Nkambe	1956-58	4,200	273
Buea (extension)	1956-58	24,000	461
Kumba Town	1956-58	23,000	766
Bali	1957-58	23,000	
Jakiri	1957-58	8,000	288
Wum	1957-58	24,000	766
Kumba station	1958-59	3,500	
Bamenda extension	1958-59	10,000	
Mamfe	1959-61	63,500	
Victoria	1960-61	60,750	

In the end then, the British government did drive through the construction of a number of urban water supply systems in the late 1950s, even though they drew heavily on money raised locally (Table 4). However, looking forward past independence the priority given to urban areas was problematic. Firstly, the proportion of the national population resident in the rural areas of Cameroon is higher than in urban areas. Nevertheless, this proportion went down in the 1980s and by 1990; it further dropped. It is therefore clear that despite our high level of urbanization, Cameroon remained largely rural. For this reason development destined to the majority had to take into consideration rural areas.

Secondly, it was realized that a dangerous gap exists in the development levels of both the urban and rural areas which threatened the political and social stability of the country. Hence the development of a country cannot be completed with the singular act of developing the urban areas at the detriment of the rural area which supplies the urban areas with food and labour. Disheartening as it may sound and seem, the rural areas are characterized by pervasive and endemic poverty, made manifest by widespread hunger, malnutrition, poor health, general lack of access to formal education, liveable housing and various forms of social and political solution compared with their urban counterparts.

Thirdly, it is being recognized that the problems of our urban centres cannot be solved unless those of the rural areas are solved, or at least contained. Despite the efforts made in the past to effect development at the rural areas, the conditions of the rural dwellers did not really improve, rather they further deteriorated. Based on this background the next section examines the dynamics of Anglophone Cameroon in rural community development. In this part of Cameroon, took another turn by laying emphasis on training and advocated the promotion of social services through local self help such as, rural water supplies at relatively low cost and with a relatively high success rate in terms of job completion and sustainability. Whilst advocates of participatory development might represent this narrative as a textbook example of the worth of community management of water supplies, the next section of our work will suggest that the merits of such an approach are more ambiguous than is often implied.

1.2.3.1 Community development and self reliance: A result of British propaganda and campaigns

The history of rural community development in Anglophone Cameroon was distinctly different from what was in Francophone Cameroon where there was no tradition of community development and where it was expected that government would provide the rural water infrastructure. In other words there was a longer history of central state intervention in rural infrastructure and development. In the francophone colony it was a citizen's right to expect the government to supply services such as water. In this region rural water supplies were constructed later, usually in the form of complete systems paid for by the government and provided by an international building contractor. But, as elsewhere in Cameroon, before the onset of the French colonial administration, communities had employed communal efforts as the mechanism for mobilizing community resources to provide physical improvement and functional facilities in the social, political and economic aspects of their lives. Communal labour was employed in constructing homesteads, clearing farm lands, roads or path way, construction of bridges and for the provision of other social infrastructural facilities required by the people. Given this uniform pre-colonial situation, it has to be colonial policies that caused differences in attitude to self-help after 1960.

The evolution of the practice of self-help development activities in Cameroon has the following five periodic dimensions in Cameroon; the pre-colonial, the German colonial period

up to 1916, the period from 1916 to independence, the federated state years and the Unitary state to the present democratic settings. Community participation in project development is viewed as an important element and a sure way to the speedy development of the rural areas in Cameroon as is well attested to in development literature. As Fonchingong and Fonjong (2002) observed, in the past, self help efforts in the Anglophone part of Cameroon particularly in the North West region, mainly related to the construction of footpaths or roads, dredging of rivers and streams, clearing of public land and market places. Later, the scope of operation included the building of schools and market stalls. Projects such as pipe-borne water, road tarring, dispensaries, and cottage hospitals and so on, were not usually attempted. Furthermore equipment used was simple; hoes, cutlasses, diggers and shovels were generally utilized. The construction of walls did not follow any standard measurements as the people used their imagination to plan and construct such projects. At this stage, there was little or no government involvement as the planning and execution of these self-help projects was the sole responsibility of the people. Where the government was involved at all, was for the purposes of taking over completed projects for operation or maintenance. But where neither the state government nor the local government councils were interested in such project, the missionaries took over.

During the colonial period, self-help community development efforts took a coercive turn. In exchange for donating their labour and local materials (timber, sand, stones) and contributing money communities received technical assistance and imported materials (galvanized pipes, valves and zincs). Apparently, this development option was most beneficial to the British since it cost less. Nonetheless at very local levels, the family, interfamily and village settings, the pre-colonial trappings of mutual assistance through self-help persisted for the construction of homesteads, clearing farmlands, clearing water points and for providing other socially felt needs. Church organizations were also able to cooperate with members for the building of schools. By the late 1940s however, an element of modern community concept in rural development was introduced in the form of mass mobilization for self-help activities. This was heralded by the passing in Britain of the Colonial Development and Welfare Act in 1939. As rightly noted by Williams, (1978), this gave a positive economic and social content to the philosophy of colonial trusteeship by affirming the need for minimum standards of nutrition health and education.

In Cameroon, this development option led ultimately to the establishment of Community Development Department after independence, which became an important organ of

government, charged with the responsibility of channeling and coordinating the efforts of the people towards promoting social and economic development (Helvetas). The Development and Welfare Fund provided for the colonies by the British Government was thus able to permeate to the grassroots level through this third tier of government. By the late 1940s however, an element of modern community concept in rural development was introduced in the form of mass mobilization for self-help activities. By the beginning of the 1950s, the Community Development Secretary for the whole of Eastern Nigeria (including the Cameroons) E.R Chadwick was explaining the immense role the governments expected self-help activities to play to complement their efforts. Reporting the Governor in Lagos he argued that: *"It is doubtful whether any greater service can be rendered today to the people of Nigeria than that of community development"*.[18]

By 1952 the total planned expenditure on Community Development and Welfare in Nigeria was over £1.8 million[19] and £29,000 was set aside for rural water supplies in Cameroon.[20] According to the British, community development had to encourage communities to carry out their development rather than providing for them. The best option was to integrate all community members. "*The people work together to shape their future. We build on these results by looking back to colonial times*"[21]

"Community Development Planning" said Chadwick *"must be planning with the people rather than for the people"* (Page, 2000: 125). Elsewhere he expanded on this slogan. *"By community development we mean the development of communities by their own effort and industry, and not development of communities by government... our object is to induce in the people a desire for progress and the will to achieve it by their own efforts".* (Page, 2000: 132)

Although with much reluctance, most communities in British Cameroon realized that the only way for rapid development was through self-help. The 1960 to 80 period also marked the evolution of a multiplicity of social clubs with aims of self-help in its largest sense. Further

[18] Buea National Archives (Hereafter BNA) Community Development Bulletin N° 8, April 1951 BNA File N° Se(1950)2
[19] Lagos Secretariat to the secretary Eastern Province July 1948 BNA File N° Se(1944)5
[20] BNA Rd(1948)1
[21]Chadwick (1952) Pamphlet "A short list of quotations concerning community development" (Government Press, Enugu) Copy loose in BNA File No Se(1950)2, Chadwick (1952) Pamphlet "What community development means in practice in the Eastern Provinces" (Government Printer, Enugu) p2 Copy loose in BNA File No Se(1950)2

efforts by government to motivate development at the grassroots led to the enactment after independence of the Local Government Reform, to create new growth centres for development. Thus, the British government made it clear that, support to Cameroonian communities will only come in to make up the difference after the communities had made their contributions. This was a position that continued after independence when government funding for community development favoured areas ready to undertake self help.

By 1960 while both parts of Cameroon officially adhered to the community development approach, only the Anglophone part actually implemented policies that reached sustainable goals. The difference is better explained by reference to colonial history than ethnic structure. Community development ideology in Anglophone Cameroon was a 45 year effort. It essentially, improved the ability of communities to collectively make better decisions about the use of resources such as infrastructure, labour and knowledge. Subsequently, local leaders adopted and propagated this colonial development option. This was the case in 1940, for example, where the Resident in Buea declared.

"it is for the District Officers to ascertain from the people what they really want and from the technical officers whether these wants are practicable, and if so what their estimates are."[22]

The desire to achieve development by starting with villagers had also been a long-standing colonial aim. "*If we could approach the people in the villages with the set purpose of helping them in local social and material development we should be starting at the base and should surely win the co-operation of all classes.*"[23]

In this light, historically, the notion of community development owes a great deal to the efforts of colonial administrators. Hence after the Second World War the British Colonial Office became concerned with community development. Some authors suggest that the British 'created' as a means to develop 'basic education' and social welfare in its colonies. From Chadwick's campaigns one can deduce three major approaches to community development in Cameroon – the "education approach", the 'project approach' and the 'service approach'. The "education approach" is involved teaching the people improved methods and techniques to ensure their own wellbeing. This approach was later on adopted by some major ministries in Cameroon such as the Ministries of Health and education as well as the Ministry of Mines, Water and Power and Education. The project approach which was greatly mobilized by the Republic aimed at motivating communities by undertaking socio-economic projects,

[22] Resident Buea (Murray), minute, 23rd March 1940, BNA, File Ra (1938)1
[23] Resident Buea (Bridges) to Commisioner (Enugu), June 1947, BNA Se(1947)4

such as government farms, schools and water projects. In the government circles in Cameroon, the project approach which was generally referred as to "rural development" was used in most agricultural projects of the 80s. The third approach to community development is that which was encouraged by the British. It encourages the active participation and initiative of the local people and was used as the main strategy for community development in Cameroon. This "service approach" concentrates on the provision of social amenities based on the initiative of the community itself. This approach to community development is popularly known as "self-help" in Cameroon. Self-help development according to Chadwick, can seen as both an object (what) and a process (how). As an object, it should induce change to achievement development.

As a process, it should be stepwise to assist individuals to acquire skills, attitudes and perceptions required for their democratic participation in community improvement problems as possible, in order of priority determined by their increasing level of competence. Still according to Chadwick, (Page, 2000: 124-144), community development is a process by which the efforts of the people themselves are united with those of the government authorities to improve the economic, social and cultural conditions of the communities, to integrate these communities in the life of the nation and enable them to contribute fully to national progress. One can understand that the British view of development as a process had two main reasons, (1) saving money and (2) a belief that nations should be encouraged to partake in their own development.

How can we assess colonial rural self help? Firstly, in this field, the British understood better the meaning of trusteeship over Cameroon. They were aware that their reign in Cameroon was temporary and that communities will probably need to invest in further development of their nation. Hence, participative development initiative should be imparted on the individual, the community, socio-cultural organizations, institutions, and governments. Colonial policy was geared towards producing autonomy. Secondly, self-help should have its roots within the economic and socio-cultural milieu within which it is to be practiced. It is the internal dynamics of this socio-cultural and political praxis that motivate the achievement of development goals: "*If the people are given too much assistance their morale will be killed. It has been proved over and over again…that too much financial assistance demoralizes and pauparises people. Giving villagers money kills the spirit of self help"* (Chadwick, 1950 in Page, 2000: 136)

"It is not the model village but the model villager who is our aim…we do not accept that better conditions create better citizens; we wish to see better citizens working for better conditions" (Chadwick, 1951 in Page, 2000: 135)

What we should retain from the above quotations is that we were still in the 1950s and these campaigns were basically in the British part of Cameroon. Not only that but the scheme was not initially very successful in Cameroon because lots of people thought that 'voluntary labour' was another sort of forced labour. Even so, the first community water project undertaken was near Tiko in 1950. It succeeded[24] even without the support of the local council. The success of projects such as that of Tiko convinced the administrators of this part of Cameroon on the community development. Consequently, this method was adopted as the rural development strategy of the West Cameroon government after independence.

1.2.3.2 Community development becomes the West Cameroon government's propaganda (1960-1972)

After 1961 the people of Cameroon expected their new African government to give them something. One of the things that people requested was potable water (Box 3).

Box 3: Petition from Bova/Bonakanda to the secretary of State, Ministry of Local Government, lands and surveys, April 1964 (Page, 2000: 175)

> "*The government is the father of all, and as a father, she can never get fed up with the continual appeals of her children. We hope, therefore, that our present appeal will in no way incur your wrath as it happens to have been made on the constraint of certain unbearable circumstances, which humanly speaking, are beyond our control. To mention a few: - there has been a continuous exodus of school children from our dear NA School Bova which had been set up here by your government for the benefit of our community. Apart from that, most marriages have boiled down to abrupt divorces thus bringing to a definite halt the procreation of the human race in this sector of our territory. The only reason for these divorces and school leaving stems from this water problem as both the women and the school children have to travel long distances to fetch water in order to live*."

In response to these demands and in order to protect their limited financial resources, whilst improving the lives of their citizens, the government decided to use the community development approach (Box 4)

[24] Success here denotes the fact that the Tiko project was constructed solely by the population.

Box 4: Government response (From SDO Victoria to Bova/Bonakanda petition, 1964, (Page, 2000: 175)

> "*My dear countrymen, now that we are independent and self-governing we have to work harder than before if we are to prosper. This means that we have to use our God-given hands to the full for, as the books of God say, Heaven helps those who help themselves. In the discussions that follow shortly I will like this idea of self help to come foremost in our minds*."

Initially they were helped by SATA/Helvetas (a Swiss NGO). After a few years the West Cameroon Government also received financial support from Yaounde for community development via a scheme called 'Minor Rural Equipment' grants. As President Ahidjo said "*The government wishes in this way to break with the passive attitude that is due to the alluring concept of a Providential State... the Minor Rural Equipment formula is capable of initiating that permanent exchange of views between the base and the summit which the formulation and execution of the [Development] Plan demands*." (cited in Page, 2000: 180). The East Cameroon government showed its love for the community development strategy applied in West Cameroon. Many contracts were signed with SATA/Helvetas and the SATA office was moved from Buea to Yaoundé but it didn't work.

However some officials disagreed about whether communities had the technical capacity to run their water supplies. While some Swiss and Cameroonian government officials were convinced that projects identified, planned, executed and managed by the community outlive those imposed by a benefactor with little or no community participation, the engineers in the Public Works Department were skeptical. For example O.B.Sendze, the senior Cameroonian engineer in the PWD, disagreed with a Swiss engineer from SATA/Helvetas who was convinced that the "*community can undertake their own maintenance effectively we do not share this flattering view... it does not seem feasible to us that this community that found it so difficult to use wells properly will suddenly be able to maintain such a complicated water system on their own*"[25] However, despite this disagreement the Government of West Cameroon aimed to develop every community by encouraging definite self-help activities of communities to see the impact of these dynamic local community resources in the attainment of project goals.

As in colonial days, capital expenditure by the West Cameroon administration was conditional on the provision of labour and materials by the community. If communities didn't

[25] Director PWD (Sendze) to Permanent Secretary Ministry of Works and Transport, October 1965. BNA Rd (1959)5 quoted in Page 2000: 184.

supply labour and materials, the West Cameroon Government withdrew its grants. In addition communities were expected to contribute 30% of the finances (Page, 2000: 182). Officials argued that CD/SATA argued that *"it is not advisable for the government to sponsor a water project from start to finish. This would induce the people to relax and what is more they might not think it is their place to care for it*" (Page, 2000: 182) It is one of the most fundamental principles of this approach that "*A community which knows it will be solely responsible for its water supply will be much more careful with its drinking water than if this were being managed by the Government*" (Page, 2000: 182) [26] Most of the new projects were operated through gravity using spring sources. The first system built this way after independence was at Ekona, and many other systems were inaugurated within the next six years (Table 5 below)

Table 5 : CD/SATA Helvetas water supplies 1964-1970

Divisions	Water points (springs) built	Water schemes built	Water systems under construction	Water systems planned
Fako	0	3	1	1
Meme	6	5	1	0
Manyu	3	4	1	1
Momo	9	2	0	0
Mezam	17	0	1	1
Mentchum	11	0	0	0
Bui	7	1	2	2
Donga & Mantung	17	1	1	1
Totals	70	16	7	6

Source: CD/SATA Helvetas water supplies 1964-1970 (in Page, 2000: 180)

What this table shows is that projects are equally divided between the North West and South West regions regardless of the big difference in social organization, between hierarchical societies with chiefs, and less stratified societies without chiefs. Officially, communities had to pay for the maintenance of the constructions but they hardly did. .

After the creation of the unitary state in 1972, the CD model, working with SATA/Helvetas continued but slowed down as the Yaounde government funded SCANWATER (a private company) to build rural water supplies. Helvetas also became a bit frustrated with their projects in South West Cameroon and decided to focus only on the North West because those

[26] BNA, ExCO Memoranda 11th April 1961

communities participated more. The economic crisis of the 80s reduced the purchasing power of citizens and greatly affected their contributions in maintenance works.

The colonial legacy has been adapted to new circumstances and the precise words that make up the community development discourse have been appropriated to suit new contexts, but nevertheless it is the difference between British and French colonial ideas and not ethnicity which explains why community development is well developed in some parts of Cameroon and not in others.

1.3 An independent country in search of a basic pattern for co-governance: Models that differ between urban and rural areas

According to Williams (1978: 17) there are four essential elements in the complex process of rural community development: "(a) *it encourages analysis of local problems with in order to improve the standards of living of individuals by using as much as possible on the initiative of those concerned; (b) it provides technical and other services in ways which encourage initiative and cooperation; (c) it considers the local community, the basic unit for planning and development; and (d) decision-making power is spread while laying emphasizes on democracy.*" The contribution of self-help development activities to rural development depends largely on the existence of committed local leaders in the areas concerned as well as the extent to which government encourages local planning and participation. The wide variations in the scope and impact of self-help activities on the welfare of rural dwellers in different parts of the study area reflect the nature of community leadership and their inclination towards self-help programmes.

From 1961 to 1972 Cameroon had a federal constitution, and water supply came under the remit of the state of West Cameroon. The investments of the late 1950s had generally established an adequate urban water infrastructure in terms of coverage.[27] The systems in Tombel and Mamfe were completed using funds from the colonial period. However, within a

[27] Two major reviews were carried out just after Independence. The first report was based on a 15 day research exercise by an American engineer (Besozzi), in September 1962 on behalf of USAID. The full report has not been located. Extensive extracts are available in the minute prepared by the Director of Public Works (Ndumu) for discussion in ExCo (15th October 1962). (BNA Rd(1961)2). The second report.Portable water supplies in West Cameroon. was prepared by Mr. A.H. Holloway, the Regional Community Water Supply Officer - AID-NESA in 1963.

decade the infrastructure was considered inadequate. By 1971 politicians accepted the fact that the only lasting solution to this vexing problem of shortage of water lay in the complete reconstruction of most of these water supply schemes on modern lines with provisions to accommodate future demands (BNA). On the one hand, this was because of rapid urbanization and changing water consumption patterns, which increased demand. In Buea, for example, increasing domestic demand was growing so fast that restrictions had been placed on water use by 1963.[28] The Victoria supply, which had been constructed in 1961, was designed for 9,000 people. (SATA Annual Report 1970, BNA open shelves). By 1972 the population was around 17,000 and the system was highly inadequate.[29] On the other hand it was because the Government of West Cameroon had limited funds from the Federal Government in Yaounde so that there was a shortage of investments to meet the new demand. The failure of the government in Buea to substantially increase the revenue from water rates reduced their chances of raising private capital or qualifying for aid.[30] The result was very limited new construction during the 60s.

Table 6: Construction of piped urban water supplies in West Cameroon completed between 1961 to 1972[31]

Mamfe (extension)	1962-63
Tombel	1963-64
Buea (extension)	1968-69
Bamenda (extension)	1969
Banso (Kumbo)	1969-72
Kumba (extension)	1972

In 1972 the Federal constitution was abandoned and Cameroon became a unitary state run from Yaoundé. Though this was a decade of rapid national economic growth and personal prosperity for many urban households, there was little investment in water supplies. In 1968, with the creation of the National Water Company of Cameroon (SNEC), the government handed over to this monopoly (the SNEC) the distribution of drinking water in urban areas. Nevertheless, the population continued to be responsible for their management. The contract

[28] BNA Rd(1956)1, BNA Rd(1961)3
[29] P.W.D. Half-yearly report, Chapter 3, July-December 1968. BNA Open Shelves
[30] Permanent. Secretary. Ministry of Development and Internal Economic Planning to Dir. P.W.D. (Ndumu), September 1966, BNA Rd(1962)5
[31] In 1972 there was an 8 million CFAF. Extension to the Kumba Water Supply. Cameroon Outlook, 22nd November 1972

between SNEC and the Cameroon government formally seemed to be a concession. Nevertheless, in practice, the rights and obligations of each party led to a "the affermage". It embarked on some small projects in the urban water infrastructure in Anglophone Cameroon including the new intake and treatment works at Limbe (formerly known as Victoria) opened in the 1990s, and minor extension in Kumba, but otherwise the in the last 15 years there was no major construction works in this part of Cameroon. That is why SNEC eventually be limited to financial equipment necessary for the operation of the system, while it was the State which was responsible for financing new infrastructure, which was sold directly to SNEC. Although at the beginning SNEC, obtained several loans for construction, the financial problems of the company increased constantly.

From the late 1970s to the mid 1980s the water infrastructure was transformed across the whole of Cameroon (Tables 3 and 4). The target was to supply every town in Cameroon with treated water that met WHO standards (in terms of quality, coverage, quantity, continuity and costs). There were 19 individual projects in the North-west and South-west regions (Table 4)[32] and 7,000 Million CFAF were spent in the North-west region as a whole. No existing urban system was left completely untouched, though in some cases (such as Kumbo and Buea) the changes were limited.

1.3.1 Water management under Société Nationale des Eaux du Cameroun (SNEC)

Until 1968, shortly after independence, the responsibility for the distribution of drinking water in Cameroon became the duty of the municipality, with a management system inherited from the French colonial system. Each locality collected tax intended to cover the costs incurred by using water, electricity, garbage collection and operation of the ambulance system. This tax covered, among others, the costs of operation and maintenance of free public tap stands, which was a placed at times disadvantaged sections of the population. In 1968, with the creation of the National Water Company of Cameroon (SNEC), the government handed over to this monopoly (the SNEC) the distribution of drinking water in urban areas. Nevertheless, the population continued to be responsible for their management. The contract between SNEC

[32] Minister of Mines and Power (Kima), Cameroon Tribune 3rd March 1987

and the Cameroon government formally seemed to be a concession. Nevertheless, in practice, the rights and obligations of each party led to "affermage".

Table 7 : National water prices between 1963-1999 (Before 1993, the French Franc was tied to CFAF at 1FF=50FCFA, after the 1993 100% devaluation of the CFAF 1FF=100FCFA)[33]

Date	Price of domestic water (FCFA/m³)	French France equivalence (price/m³)
1963-1970	7.7	0.154
1971	30-70.5	0.6-1.4
1980	72.5	1.45
1982 (January)	125	2.58
1982 (April)	222	2.71
1986	244	4.88
1999	271	2.71

Finally, the state control on the distribution system , which is already very demanding at the beginning due to price controls, and financial problems (in Cameroon the State , not SNEC , was responsible for setting prices for water distribution throughout the national territory in order to ensure uniform prices throughout the country regardless of the cost of production. Nationally most of the effort has focused on Bafoussam, Douala and Yaoundé. The most significant material change to urban water supplies in Anglophone Cameroon has been the slowly declining importance of public tap stands and the increasing importance of metered delivery to individual homes.

Practically, the disappearance of public tap stands (table 6), which were initially free and paid for later forced the population to adopt various strategies, such as buying water from individuals, but also the return to wells and natural sources, dangerous alternatives if we consider the consequences in terms of health. In this sense, the concession from 1968 materialize that the expansion of the network to new users was the responsibility of SNEC and payment extensions was charged in part to beneficiaries, either through prepayment or through direct beneficiaries' contribution to payment of extension costs to the network without right to reimbursement after.

[33] 1963-1970 figure: BNA Rd (1961)2, Holloway Report Rd (1961)3, and Efungani personal papers, 1971 figure: BNA Rd (1965)2. Other figures: Cameroon Tribune 13th January 1982, Cameroon Tribune 18th August 1982, Cameroon Tribune, 10th October 1986

Table 8: Increasing number of private water connections 1978-1985

Town	No of public taps (1978)	No of public taps (1985)	No of private connections (1978)	No of private connections (1985)
Bali	130	63	8	101
Mbengwi	3	-	-	43
Wum	73	-	32	38
Nkambe	45	33	21	246
Jakiri	48	32	2	61
Kumbo	63	52	47	-

Source: Société Nationale des eaux du Cameroun

Summarily then the story of construction is one of three distinct episodes of intensive investment, interspersed with long periods of little activity. The first piped water supplies were mainly to supply colonial officials and did not benefit Cameroonians in any meaningful way. However the government was only one of a number of institutions investing in water supply, and the Missions and plantations probably provided more water to Cameroonians. After 1916 the government dominates the story of infrastructure investment; the state not only raised the capital for construction (mostly through grants and loans) but it generally subsidized operation and maintenance as well.

Water rates were introduced in the 1930s, but cost recovery was only really effective after 1980, when metering and regular billing became standard and cost-reflective pricing was introduced. Whilst domestic connections have become more common since the 1970s there remains a very significant proportion of urban households who cannot afford to bring water into the home and who rely on public tap stands or on their neighbours to access the network. A summary of the main water development periods can be seen in table 7 below.

Table 9: Evaluation of water construction across the colonial periods and post colonial period[34]

1900-1916	Initial investment by German Colonial State, Missions and Plantations
1916-1955	Minimal investment under British rule
1955-1965	Intensive investment in the last five years of the colonial period and few years of independence
1965-1980	Minimal investment under the last years of the Federal state (1961-1972) and the first decade of the Unitary (1972) constitutions
1980-1985	Very intensive investment as a preparation for the handover to SNEC
1985-2011	Limited constructions and diversity in potable water accessibility strategies

[34] Ernie Efungani, (2009), The History of water politics and the politics of water history

At this juncture, it is equally interesting to bring in the history of community water supplies in Cameroon. Preferably, that analysis will be evoked later in the study because it acts like a response to one of the major hypothesis put forward in this work; that of visible disparities in the community approach as it applies in Anglophone and Francophone Cameroon.

1.3.2 Understanding historical narratives in contemporary water politics

It must be noted that no successful society/community, nation or continent today emerged without its precedents. Community development had been part of the ways of life of people in several cultures, making it not a new development or phenomenon. Williams (1978) while reflecting on the African traditional ways of life, consider Community Development as an "old tradition". The concept of community development is a modern way of qualifying these age long practices of self initiated activities with aims of developing communities. In this regard, community development in Cameroon can also be seen as part of the tradition or cultural practices of people. The culture of helping one another, developing the communities and strengthening the tie of communal existence and relationship had long been part of the Cameroon people. In short, Community Development is as old as Cameroon itself.

The importance of community development in contemporary Cameroonian society cannot be overemphasized, as much as it cannot be relegated to the background; as its significance stems from its recognized role in the process of achieving the improvement of economic, political, social and cultural conditions of the communities. As a strategy, community development ensures rapid national development hence William's (1978) assertion "*community development is one of the major planks upon which National developmental policies and their implementation are hinged"*. A critical observation of community development evolution as developed by the British was to letting things done formally to improve the standards of their communities. In the Community Development efforts of Cameroon, intervention is one unique area that must not be overlooked. This intervention is that which goes beyond what the people or local communities undertake as self-help efforts.

This is why the group dynamic perspective of rural community development becomes imperative especially as issues in rural community development with special emphasis on self-help approach tend to rely on the "felt need theory" and the "traditional democratic

theory". These theories are indicative of the place of people's participation in the development of the rural populace. Hence the search by development theories over the years for alternative strategies that would not only accelerate growth but also spread the benefits of development to the rural areas, the distortion of Cameroon's development pattern as decried by William (1978) when he wrote about the profound dualism between the urban and rural areas and the proportionate costs and consequences of French Cameroon infrastructural lagging behind in community development.

The transfer of management from the central state to SNEC, a parastatal corporation ushered in a new phase of water politics. In 1994, faced with the problems caused by the removal of free public stand taps and the fact that the state tried to implement a system of "self-sustained" taps water problems in both rural and urban areas was still acute. This system aimed at ensuring at least the minimal conditions to access to safe drinking water for everyone. It was used extensively, and it was specially designed so that each tap stand be managed by local associations. But this system proved highly unstable and vulnerable to everyday management problems, and most of the tap stands completely closed down one after another due to the withdrawal of SNEC. It is important to note that the cost of distribution of drinking water in public taps were (and are still) much higher to public subscribers (about 50 to 100 %), due to the cost of maintenance and management of each tap stand.

The failure to meet the initial objectives of this strategy led to the reduction to less than half the number of taps. Thus, in 1987, there was a public tap (free) for every 2236 inhabitants in urban areas. If we consider that at this time, 32% of urban households had a connection, we could estimate that every public tap served 1,520 people (already insufficient, because according to the international standards it should not exceed 500 people). In addition to the fact that public fountains have disappeared with time in Cameroonian cities and those that resisted are highly paid for, in 2002 a public tap served 65 586 inhabitants in urban areas. Meanwhile 24 % of urban homes had private connections, thus greatly reducing this number to approximately 48 326 people. With the massive closure of free public taps led users (private subscribers) to retail water to individuals at prices that at least doubled the private rates which were already very high.

The 1970-1990 period was a stage of maturity and growth of the company, where it spread in many small towns centers. The system that was originally with minor modifications,

continued to pull on until 1991, when the deep economic crisis which manifested in 1987 had its first visible effects on the system. Thus in 1991, SNEC, whose financial situation had become unbearable, single-handedly decided to close public taps facing problems due to accumulated bills from councils. In this light, it is important to note the responsibility of the administration in the financial situation of SNEC. Representative data in 1993 for unpaid bills accumulated by the State amounted to 30,000 million FCFA. In the same year, SNEC recorded a turnover of 500 million FCFA. The decision to close the last public tap supplying councils was due. Nevertheless, the social consequences of this closure were remarkable. Obviously, the layers of the poorest population were the most affected, while in reality it was the state that had to pay the consequences, as the percentage of the population supplied through free public fountains was between 35 and 45% of the urban population, a figure that included many of the layers of the poorest population. The creation and failure of the system of payment of public fountains created tension between some towns and SNEC.

As will be illustrated in chapter 5 of this study, the tension escalated into direct confrontations between SNEC and local communities over the ownership of infrastructure. The first, largest and most violent of these cases is Kumbo. Thereafter, in Bali a similar process took place a year later. Practically, the disappearance of public tap stands, which were initially free and paid for later forced the population to adopt various strategies, such as buying water from individuals, but also the return to wells and natural sources, dangerous alternatives if we consider the consequences in terms of health. The situation which had been supported by the Bali people only triggered their anger with the closure of public taps during the *Lela* dance, a key annual cultural event during which numerous visitors as well as Bali elite return to their hometown. In this sense, the Bali people materialized that the expansion of the network to new users was the responsibility of SNEC and payment extensions were also too high. The protest march which began peacefully ended in violence and the SNEC officials were forced to leave town the same day. This same protest action was carried out in Tombel by naked women (who urinated on the step of the SNEC office, throwing down various herbs) to send away the SNEC officials. What is more fundamental, however, is that in 1982 when SNEC took over the water supply in Bali, the entire 1957 system was renovated including the catchment, treatment works, the distribution network and taps. So the infrastructure that the community claimed to own in the 1990s had been entirely renewed by the Cameroonian government.

In Kumbo an angry crowd attacked and drove the SNEC officials. The protest was only controlled when the military police fired into the crowd killing six people. A troop was later on sent Kumbo. SNEC officials continued to work in Kumbo but Kumbo population refused to pay bills issued (Page, 2000). They side stepped SNEC and called for meetings to plan on the management of their system. A new institution was created as a result; the Kumbo Water Authority (KWA)[35], to take over the operation of the infrastructure and who have continued to manage the network ever since.

Table 10: The Impact of the imposition of a cost recovery water rate by SNEC[36]

Kumbo	Community appropriate infrastructure from SNEC	1991
Bali	Community appropriate infrastructure from SNEC	1994
Tombel	Community appropriate infrastructure from SNEC	1994
Mutengene	SNEC fail in their attempt to appropriate the infrastructure from the community	1998
Muyuka	Community fail in their attempt to appropriate the infrastructure from SNEC	2001

In Mutengene, it was the contrary. Faced with the problem of high population and urban growth, the town's water supply could no longer meet the demands of its population. The Mutengene people asked SNEC to take over the management of their water supply which was constructed in the early 70s. Though SNEC's aid was openly demanded, transfer of ownership from community to SNEC was to be achieved through negotiations between the corporation and the community's representative - the "F*on*" (chief). However, the community learned that any official negotiation necessitated the payment of finances to the fon. This situation was strongly contested by community members and the handing over never took place. Till date, a community committee was put in place to run the system.

This experience had two significant differences in relation to the state and started in the early 1990s. As illustrated in the recent ownership claims or change movements it is perhaps more difficult to sustain change (or reform) than to initiate a reform. Although there have hardly

[35] The evolution of the Kumbo and Bali will be better analysed in part 3 of this study
[36] SNEC office

been any objective analyses of the impact, both sets of experiences had several common lessons for future development in the sector. The Kumbo, Bali and Tombel water supplies had a bold break with the past, and deserve attention for the stupendous effort they made to reclaim their water supplies and render them more "community-based", "demand responsive" and "participatory". It is therefore unfortunate that the unresolved shortcomings of SNEC supposedly hampered its effectiveness and sustainability.

These case studies of how communities manifested in the different regions document the situation on the ground, and identify issues that need to be considered while scaling up. In particular, it notes the discordance between programmes, strategies and guidelines framed by Cameroonian government, and the problems and pressures faced in implementing these programmes. It also highlights the problems faced by small towns, who feel their existing institutional structures are dismantled or need to 'fit into' the new institutional setting.

The protest action in Kumbo was based on the fact that communities greatly participated in cash and kind to construct the schemes. The Kumbo people point out that funds for the construction were negotiated between a Nso elite (Bernard Fonlon) and the Canadian government. There is an additional claim that they themselves owned the infrastructure because they had paid for it in the 1970s through individual donations and they had dug the trenches in which the pipes were put as part of their usual voluntary community labour. Meanwhile if one questions SNEC officials they attest that the Nso elite was a Cameroonian diplomat in the late 60s, thus the negotiations with the Canadian government was on behalf of the Cameroonian government. But all these accounts only render ownership claims in Kumbo water very blur as other versions also hold that the then West Cameroon government also invested in the scheme. In other words the accounts are vary depending on who you interview and his attachment to the state or the community.

Ownership claims in Tombel were based on the fact that their water supply built in 1963 was a gift to Tombel people from the then Prime Minister, John Foncha.[37] During his tours before the first general elections in 1959 Foncha visted Tombel. While in Tombel women raised the problem of drinking water. Foncha then promised the people of Tombel that he would

[37] Various versions of this story were heard in Tombel or were told to me by Tombel elites in Buea inApril 1999. I am grateful to George Ngwane for introducing me to the Tombel community in Buea.

personally ensure that they have the water supply. Work to provide Tombel with drinking water started after independence. According to the population they are convinced it was a personal gift from Foncha. Just like all the other projects the infrastructure claimed in 1994 had been renovated and extended. However, after taking control the Tombel Community Water Committee actually disconnected the SNEC water treatment works and returned to using the treatment system that had been used in the earlier period.

Of critical importance, is the point noted in the different contexts that unless the state agrees to the principle of community management of government funds for water supply, it would be difficult to talk of success in the supply of water services. However it is tempting to say that for the first time in the history of water provision in Cameroon, the government was explicitly recognizing the legitimacy of community participation in management. It is clear that national and state governments were unprepared for the actions. Meanwhile the main question is how sustainable are community water supplies in the Cameroon Western Highlands. To what degree can the different communities manage their systems bearing in mind that they prefer community water committees to SNEC. In none of these towns was there any desire to return to state ownership.

Summarily, during the early independence years, where each system of education maintained its own colonial culture, the French in their section (Francophone Cameroon) had a highly centralized government meanwhile the British in the Anglophone part allowed some degree of autonomy. The centralized (French) and the decentralized (British) administrative procedures clearly illustrate a great difference between the present day Anglophone and Fancophone philosophy (Lekunze 2001). A harmonization of these systems present structural and organizational problems which today are very apparent in water management through the community approach in Cameroon. The community philosophy being a decentralized administrative method seems to have been adopted and more successful in the Anglophone part of Cameroon than in the French speaking section which depends more on public intervention for development or more specifically in the supply of potable water (Van Der Waarde and Tah, 2004).

This is a powerful ideology, but there is a problem. What is presumed to drive community management in Anglophone Cameroon does not seem to exist in Francophone Cameroon (Page, 2002). According to him, he presumes that the impulse toward community

management has its roots in the colonial period rather than some old African tradition. This is not to argue that the claim for a tradition of cooperation is wrong, but that it is only part of the explanation for the current interest in community development in some parts of Cameroon. There is also a convincing situation which dates the invention of "community development" in Anglophone Cameroon to between 1950 and 1952, when "self help" became the main British strategy for implementation of the new socio-economic infrastructure in the colonial development policy.

Page's presumption of a better application of the community ideology by Anglophone regions is also shared by Lucy Mair (1936) a liberal anthropologist who, just like many other analysts deemed the system of indirect rule[38] and association[39] to be equivalent, but praised indirect rule as a progressive form of community participation allowing self-determination. This view is further supported by Ribot while emphasizing that Francophone West African governments decentralized after independence with the express purpose of introducing "participatory local governments". He argues still that most of these countries which had introduced decentralization maintained a system of "ruling party control" and administrative oversight that strangled local autonomy which was the case of Cameroon until the early nineties with the introduction of multi-partism.

As a strategy for mobilizing communities to undertake small-scale development projects (both in urban and rural settings), community development was enormously successful. In no scale of work was this truer than water supply although the scale of work only took off after independence. In Anglophone Cameroon, one of the lasting legacies has been the sense of community autonomy by insistently persuading the people that "heaven helps those who help themselves" since there is a doubt of the government's ability. The subsequent history of community participation after independence records the formal introduction of the Community Development Department (CDD) as part of the Ministry of Agriculture. This

[38] British authorities empowered local traditional leaders, as in the case of the monarchy of Uganda, but if no suitable leader could be found (in the traditional Western sense of the term); the British would simply choose local rulers to suit them. This was the case in Kenya and Nigeria, and the new leaders, often called "warrant chiefs", were not always supported by the local population. European elites also often chose local leaders with similar traits to their own, despite these traits not being suited to native leadership.

[39] French rule is said to be based on the twin ideologies of the centralized unitary French government of the Metropole, with the French colonial ideology of Assimilation. Colonial Assimilation argued that French law and citizenship was based on universal values that came from the French revolution. Mirroring French domestic citizenship law, French colonial law allowed for anyone who could prove themselves culturally French (the "Evolués") to become equal French citizens

department used self-help or community participation methods on rural water supply projects while working with a Swiss NGO, SATA/Helvetas (Zimmermann 1981; Helvetas 1989). Although the Community Development Department did exist in Fancophone Cameroon, it has never been as influential or effective as in Anglophone Cameroon (Page, 2002, Fokwang, 2003). Thus it is argued that contemporary community management in parts of Cameroon is a legacy of the British colonial development policy as well as effective manipulation of the ideology of tradition.

Conclusion

This chapter made exposition of the inner dynamics of community development in Cameroon; as well as establishing the fact that the survival instinct and the societal felt-needs induce most self-help activities. This community-based or community-dictated development approach involves the movement of the people designed to promote better living for the whole community within the active participation of, and if possible on the initiative of the community concerned. This community-dictated approach was designed by the British (through widespread campaigns) in West Cameroon to promote better living for the whole community with the active participation of, and if possible on the initiative of the community concerned.

From the traditional viewpoint, Cameroonians used to be very hardworking people who would not look back in helping their kins, as well as contributing for the progress and development of their communities in the areas of, road construction, building, market, monetary assistance to neighbours or kinsmen and provision of labour. Development of the country should not be considered or left in the hands of government alone. Community development as a concept may be new, but in practice, Cameroonians had been fully involved in community development efforts.

Taking our cues from the human capital that existed in Anglophone Cameroon, we hypothesize that colonial education may have fostered long-term growth through its effect on communities by fostering community development. It is important to note that we restrict our

analysis to colonial education. Obviously, also pre-colonial, indigenous habits instilled in people some social skills and knowledge, and which builds their human capital and so contribute to, among other things, economic growth. Alternatively, they may have interacted with (fostered or hindered) the development of colonial systems. Such indigenous education systems predated and often co-existed with colonial education efforts, and may have been important because colonial administration and education systems were often limited.

The contribution of self-help development activities to community development depends largely on the approach of committed colonial leaders in the Cameroons (East and West) as well as the extent to which government (East and West) adopted and encouraged local planning and participation. The wide variations in the scope and impact of self-help activities in different parts of Cameroon reflect the nature of community leadership and their inclination towards self-help programmes. This implies that in the areas where there were no effective self-help initiatives, community development activities had less impact on the population.

This is in line with the conclusion reached in this chapter that self-help was a relevant approach implored by the British for development in Cameroon; hence community development is a process that leads not only to the creation of more jobs, income and infrastructure, but also communities that are better able to manage change. Hence community members can better mobilize existing skills, reframe problems, work cooperatively and use community assets in new ways.

CHAPTER 2

THE CHALLENGE OF INSTITUTIONAL FRAGMENTATION IN CAMEROON: WATER POLICIES THAT LACK IMPLEMENTATION

Introduction

The policies of decentralization and privatization, which have been embraced by many developing countries, have also become the formula in Cameroon since the early 90s. Cameroon has historically been characterized by some degree of decentralization and privatization, although with limited success. This sub-section will assess the extent to which the present decentralization and privatization policies represent new features, challenges and opportunities. Thus, the aim of this section is threefold. First, it assesses the relevance of Cameroon's historical experiences of decentralization and privatization for the understanding of current ongoing processes in the management of community water supplies in sub urban and rural areas. The focus will be on two forms: the dilemmas surrounding the privatization /decentralization of the Cameroon potable water sector and secondly an assessment of the post-decentralization / privatization of the potable water sector and local governance with attention centred on community water projects (Bakker 2007).

The privatization of the Cameroon potable water sector is raising many debates amongst anti and pro privatization analysts. The Kyoto Declaration embodies an increasingly dominant philosophy of development, variously termed “liberal environmentalism,” (Bernstein 2001), “green environmentalism”(Goldman 2005) or market environmentalism: a mode of resource regulation which aims to deploy markets as the solution to environmental problems(Bakker 2004).Market environmentalism offers hopes of a virtuous fusion of economic growth, efficiency, and environmental conservation through establishing private property rights, employing markets as allocation mechanisms and incorporating environmental externalities through pricing. The privatization debate is particularly acute in the water sector. Opponents of the market environmentalism argue that water is a non-substitutable resource essential for life and call for water supply to be recognized as a human right. A fundamental criticism is the argument defended by human right doctrines which argues that a human right to water does not foreclose private sector management of water supply systems.

Pro privatization on the other hand points out the difficulty of implementing "a right to water" because this will consequently lead to conflicts and potential abuse of the concept. Further still they bring out the anthropocentric aspect of human rights which fails to recognise the rights of non-humans (or ecological rights) and hereby concluding that providing a human right to water may ironically imply the further degradation of hydrological systems upon which we depend (Bakker 2007).

It is worth noting that without a clear definition of the status of water, its management will remain a real problem as the choice of the governance model depends on the perception that is held by the users. This idea is explicitly developed by Bakker (2007) when she says: *"the biophysical properties of resources, together with local governance frameworks, strongly influence the type of neoliberal reforms which are likely to be introduced: common pool , mobile resources more amenable to mercerization, whereas natural monopolies such as water supply networks are more amenable to privatization".*

In much of the literature on "neoliberal nature" (and in many NGO and activist campaigning documents), water as a commodity is contrasted to water as a human right. After a careful analysis one realizes it is a complex situation as developed by Bakker (2007) a "commodity" refers to a property right regime applicable to resources while "human rights" is a legal category applicable to individuals. The difficulty in distinguishing water has had significant implications for the success of privatization struggles. Attention to these policies and how they apply in Cameroon is inevitable as they can be a cornerstone in understanding the current platform of diverse actors that operate in the potable water sector and the reaction of the population as a consequence. In our problem analysis we argued that institutional and jurisdictional fragmentation as the main problem underlying effective water governance in Cameroon. As a result is difficult to analyze local community water schemes witout putting them within the larger water context. In the next section we will be presenting the different actors existing in the Cameroon water sector.

2.1 The General Institutional Framework: Rules and Actors

In considering sustainability of water resources use, the role played by deciding stakeholders is undoubtedly crucial. Research in water management in the Western Highland region of Cameroon will certainly be incomplete without an outline and analyses of the legal and planning atmosphere at the national scale which is having ineligible impacts at regional and

local levels. The dynamics underlying the implementation of rules and regulations have been underestimated or not given appropriate attention. Since after independence in Cameroon, governance has been highly centralized and authoritarian; a situation whose effects were quite visible and rendering the strongest regulations put in place to promote sustainability to remain wishful thinking. As a consequence, this observation implies that the focus had to be shifted from the physical resources to the identification of actor categories and practices that play a significant role in water management. Of primary interest in this respect are the inevitably occurring power differences which have a wide range of implications both in the short term and long-run periods in the domain of local water projects.

This section outlines the gap between national policies, water acts as opposed to the regulatory framework or corresponding application at the local level as well as their associated effects. It aims to analyze the roles played by deciding stakeholders, and their surrounding institutional framework in relation to water management and community water supplies in the Western Highlands of Cameroon in particular. An analysis of the official setting contrary to traditional concepts and practices in water management apparently portray antagonisms and dilemmas. The question that comes to mind here is to what extent the efforts to meet the needs of the local population comply with their expectations while also ensuring sustainability of the scarce water resource. Better still to what extent do policies (decentralization, privatization etc) being legislated into appropriate laws implemented in practice? What are its effects on the ground?

2.1.1 Jurisdictional fragmentation in Water Governance in Cameroon

After independence, laws and regulations stipulated by the colonial administration were amended to reflect the new realities of ecological control by the government run by the indigenous people. The policy direction that Cameroon took was spelt out in a series of laws at different periods. As stated by Kenmogne and al, (2006), the power to control and guide the use of resources resided with the state. The legal framework prevailing in Cameroon in water management has evolved at a very slow and less dramatic pace since 1960 (independence) and demanding all along that the state ameliorates management. This subsection highlights some major texts relative to water management and sanitation in Cameroon:

Box 5: Water laws and policies that lack implementation

Law n° 84/013 of 5 December 1984 based on water in Cameroon aimed at assuring water quality, has been relatively useless since no correspondent application text was put forward for it to be executed. In the same light, Law n° 96/12 of 5 August 1996 which apparently precises the competence of territorial collectivities has no application text put up.

Most important is law n° 98/005 of 14 April 1998 which has been ameliorated in law n° 2004/017 of July 2004. This 2004 law is the law that prevails in Cameroon. It permits a liberalization of the water supply sector, attention to the protection of water resources, a rigorous and rational management and a national coordination of water services in the whole territory.

Source: Cheka (2007)

The liberalization of the water sector which is manifested by decentralization; is a structural adjustment policy imposed by international donors. In view of the application of the different laws promulgated, a certain number of application texts were published. With regards to laws and regulations, independence was a partial transition which normally was to be accompanied by a redefinition of the rights and duties of development actors in order to strengthen the relationship between the state and the citizens. Most institutions were inherited from the pre independence period and never closely accommodated the needs of the local communities. However, the basic decision-making institutions were to a large extent paternalistic and centralized.

The regulatory framework clearly portrayed its limitations which are still quite visible in Cameroon today. Certainly, contradictions will inevitably occur as long as partial, local or sectoral views on water supply management are concerned. Some laws and regulations could be appropriate in particular ministries but necessitate much more legitimacy and orientation in others, a situation which greatly jeopardizes widespread comprehension and application. On the bases of these findings, we asked if state interests and those of the communities can actually be harmonized. Meanwhile the former conviction that the state is the sole provider and controller of water resources in Cameroon is still prominent in some regions (the Francophone) which are lagging in the domain of community or local water supplies.

2.1.2 National water policy, a dilemma derived from the international scene: claims of the donors

Views developed integrating all aspects of the sustainability and divergent interests were brought together at the end of the eighties at the international level. Most African countries had undergone Structural Adjustment Programs (SAPs). Discouraging results pushed donors to co-ordinate their plans of action and standards of evaluation, namely by creating consultative groups, mandated to assure co-ordination among the donors (Sottas et al, 1998). However, since all attempts to improve economic conditions in African Sub Saharan countries failed, International donors came to the conclusion that the economic crisis and ecological degradation was also a crisis of the society: "*underlying the litany of Africa's development problem is a crisis of governance"* (World Bank 1989).

Following this shift in the scope of analysis, an entirely new set of criteria was superimposed on the already tight framework of Structural Adjustment Programs (SAPs). Conditional aid, as this package of foreign assistance was labeled, now comprised much more than demands for economic liberalization. It focused on institutional conduct, and, hence, new politically motivated terms of reference were introduced. Beside the improvement of administrative efficiency, agreements on the allocation of further credits systematically had to comply with the claims for strengthened liberal and democratic development (Sottas et al, 1998). Human, civil and political rights, democratic pluralism, and broader participation became crucial criteria. According to Hyden (1980), the leading concept was "good governance". Subsequently, "good governance" became the driving force for major transformations of the political and societal context claiming to reorientate administration towards effective and efficient services. At this stage of this recently introduced thinking, the state of affairs and related orientations in the management of water supplies in Cameroon is quite complicated. To mention only two antagonistic points of contention, tendencies such as top-down and bottom-up decision-making, and attempts at production and provision of water by diverse actors, hampers the elaboration of a coherent framework.

Cameroon is experiencing this new wind of change where most of its international donors insist on the fulfillment of certain prerequisites. The sudden application of the policies imposed by the international framework interacts in an environment which is not actually prepared both nationally as well as locally. This view could be backed by most

decentralization laws promulgated in Cameroon which lack correspondent regulatory texts and secondly lack precision and definition of the rights , competence and limits of the different actors present nowadays especially in the supply of community water in sub urban and rural areas.

- **Decentralization and Privatization of the Cameroon Potable Water Sector: Policies that do not correspond implementation on the ground**

Though decentralization may have its rationale and critiques, different countries embark on this course for varying reasons. Cameroon is not an exception to this general rule. The inherent deficiencies of the previous governance (the Cameroon potable water sector for example was very centralized, monopolistic and apparently inefficient) of the potable water sector in Cameroon created the need to continuously search for a viable and alternative system to address the needs and aspirations of the localities within the country's developmental objectives, whilst at the same time giving practical meaning to participatory democracy, that is grassroots democracy. There are quite a number of factors that acted in concert to help influence the process in the 1980s.

The following are the main reasons why Cameroon. The first refers to the pressure from international donor countries and agencies, particularly the IMF and the World Bank, and their conditionalities including the selection of SNEC as one of the public services to be privatized. The second refers to the re-emergence of neo-liberal philosophy which calls for prominence of the private sector as the engine of growth. The third relates to the recognition of the government's inability to provide all the means and water needs alone. Fourthly, the economic crisis of the mid 80s with reforms for economic recovery, which was based on the structural adjustment program of the IMF and the World Bank, in which decentralization was one element in the continuing process of rationalization, retrenchment and divestiture by government of its responsibilities. The fifth factor deals with the PNDP's (Programme National de Développement Participatif) long-standing commitment to popular democracy, which in its initial populist form meant direct democracy and the encouragement of community - based self-reliant development, a policy which has enhanced the proliferation of community water projects.

Cameroon’s Structural Adjustment Policy (SAP) that included privatization of State-Owned Entreprises (SOEs, some of which were the SNEC services) consisted of two phases. The first

concerns the International Monetary Fund's (IMF's) stabilization programme and secondly the World Bank's adjustment programmes, which are based on market principles: market-led development, a slim public sector due to the retreating state and a growing private sector as the engine of growth, divestiture of SOEs, private sector participation in services such as water supply, etc. In Cameroon the privatization of the potable water sector saw the entry of myriad bodies especially NGOs (both local and international) with claims of providing water to the poor rural and sub urban population.

The creation of the Ministry of Territorial Administration and Decentralization (MINATD) in August 2002 seems to translate the will of the state to advance the process of decentralization while at the same time taking into consideration imperatives of preserving national unity and social cohesion in a country characterized by social and cultural diversity. Besides, the National Governance Programme (PNG) there also exist the Local Government Training Centre (CEFAM) and the special Inter-communal Equipment and Support Fund (FEICOM) which are the other specialized state institutions under MINATD that are meant to assist the latter in the implementation of decentralization.

On the very important subject of capacity building, MINATD has embarked on a vast training of municipal councilors on leadership and council management in partnership with development cooperation agencies (Cheka, 2007). Out of the ten provinces only six have already been covered by this training programme. The initiative to train councilors is welcome, especially as stipulated by Totté et al (Totté et al, 2003, Lemarchand, 1998, Troper M, 1980) in most *"Francophone West African states peasant structures lack the capacity to ensure sustainable development.*" A view that strongly holds in the case of community water management in the Francophone regions of Cameroon as opposed to their Anglophone counterparts. The point of interest here is that the MINATD's approach seems to be too paternalistic, by assuming that councils alone are in need of capacity building in an environment where a progressive disengagement of the state is installing a wide variety of actors; institutional and even non institutional especially in a crucial domain as potable water.

While law n° 2004/017 of July 2004 clearly limits territories to regions and councils, the privatization of the water sector legally delegates the supply of potable water in rural and sub urban areas to private enterprises and NGO's whose competence is not clearly defined. The powers devolved to private enterprises and NGO's in the management of the rural and sub

urban water sector in Cameroon is quite controversial. Following the involvement of these NGOs in an important domain as water supply, there ought to be legislative and regulatory texts governing their presence (such as defining their jurisdiction and competence).

The government's interest in transferring responsibility of small-town supplies onto communities is an economic logic. However, what is the reciprocal motivation for the communities in taking on this responsibility? Primarily, the communities were and are driven by dissatisfaction with the state operator, but their action in taking control was and is still based upon the specific history of water management in these towns. In some towns of Cameroon (especially in the Anglophone section) there is a wide spread preference for community managed water supplies and the believe in the effectiveness of the community-managed water infrastructure. The impulse towards community management in the early 1990s portrays a much more widespread desire for local control that must be understood in historical terms (Page, 2002).

The interest in local control is backed by a belief that "communal action" is an authentic part of local tradition and culture that the government wishes to exploit through decentralization. Since prehistoric times, it is claimed, young men have had to work without pay for the welfare of the community. Originally this explanation holds, this work involved either tasks that required large numbers of people, such as rethatching buildings in the chief's compound. These stories of traditional communal activities are placed within a history that also includes forced road construction in during the colonial era, participation in colonial agricultural projects, and the construction of schools, clinics, and water supplies. For people in this part of Cameroon, cooperation is a part of their traditional culture.

These policies whose objective is the integration of the civil society[40] are still quite unstable in Cameroon and not bearing any fruits yet. Larson (2004) while analyzing the effectiveness of the decentralization process in most African countries Cameroon inclusive, puts forward that, the failure of these processes is partly related to the complexity of its implementation, to factors external to the models, to the multiple and alternative motives behind powers and the political economy in which these institutional changes are embedded. Meanwhile Ribot (2002) points out that *"Decentralization of any sector depends on decentralization at large. It*

[40] A definition of the term "civil society" is done in part two of this work. We accorded a subsection to that in our literature to back up the rise and organization of the society to counteract state actions in the study region.

is useless to speak of environmental-sector decentralization, for example, without speaking first of local representation, rights and recourse".

These basic elements of good governance form the enabling environment for transferring powers to downward accountable actors in the local arena. There are a number of key legal elements that shape how decentralization takes place and its consequences. *"Decentralization requires not one or another of these elements but the appropriate configuration of them all. These elements could be summarized under actors, powers and accountability*…..Ribot (2002)". Larson (2004) further argues that "natural resources are particularly amenable to governance from below, at least in part because they are already located in the local arena and within a particular history and tradition…" Each body, actor or institution involved in local management in Cameroon is insufficiently balanced. Decentralization has produced formal organizational reforms, but in actual fact these are dependent not only on formal organisations but also on informal mechanisms (Baron, 2005). These informal mechanisms are ingrained on what happens on the ground. To a large extent, formal policies exist only on paper and are still quite controversial. Realities are created overwhelmingly by informal rules. The lack of coherence between most decentralization/privatization laws and regulations in the water sector is strong in Cameroon and keep frustrating local development projects. The question that arises at this stage is whether there are effective alternatives to the involvement of the state in the development of community water projects and whether ways can be found to harmonize state and local actors' (NGO's, traditional rulers, the local population…) relations in the promotion of community water projects.

2.2 Key Actors in the water sector: Overlapping of roles

The institutional framework in Cameroon is characterized by the progressive repositioning of the state and the diverse contribution of all the actors of the water sector in the new environment. The institutional framework currently in construction is not backed by a reference document which takes into account the "National Water Policy" in order to orientate all the actors involved in the water sector (Ministry of Water and Energy, MINEE, 2005). It is worth mentioning that, while adopting the Integrated Water Resource Management (IWRM), there is a weak and unstable positioning of the existing institutions involved in the water sector which inhibits their significant manifestation at the national level. This non-integration of these institutions coupled with the co-existence of competence and powers of different water structures of the state could be cited as the main causes of the inefficiency of water

management in Cameroon. The difficulty encountered by the water sector can also be attributed to the fact that there exists no clear principle for the management of water resources at the level of the watershed coupled with the non application of the pollute/pay principle as is the case of user/pay principle found in its article 10, a situation which merits clarification within the context of good governance.

In view of the present political, technical, socio-economic and judicial environment in water management, the necessary conditions are present for an efficient follow-up of the process of IWRM in Cameroon. In such a process it is necessary to create and mobilize a "unique centre" (Ministry of Water and Energy, MINEE, 2005) to pilot the water sector. In effect, there are many risks in the absence of a unique centre of reflection and strategic orientation of great reference for an IWRM at the national level. In diverse parts of the Cameroonian territory, varied visions and practices develop leading to a generalized confusion on the part of the actors in the water sector (see figures 11 below). Even though until date, there exists no national water policy document as a unique orientation, there are instead a good number of reference documents in the water domain as well as strategic sectoral documents in the water sector. Based on the fact that there exist many strategic documents in the water sub-sectors, there is a growing need to assemble these sectoral strategies and also indispensable to have a strategic and policy document within the best time limit which will combine the sub-sectoral policies and constitute a reference guide for all the actors, including the development partners.

It is commonly admitted that the institutional framework is at the same time a set of rules established in view of satisfying the collective interest pertaining to water in all its forms, and a set of organizations created to maintain and apply these rules and satisfy this interest (Joko, 2006). In view of this we can attest that the current water sector in Cameroon has been built-up over time, based on the different events which generated consciousness of the population and the political decision-makers on the stakes surrounding water. It is worth noting that the institutional framework of the water sector in Cameroon is greatly influenced by the international environment which is today marked by neoliberal capitalism and interconnection of national economies, with competition and profit-making the main objective.

The institutional framework of the water sector in Cameroon is characterized by the central role of the Ministry of Water and Energy (MINEE, Ministère de L'Eau et d'Energie) as illustrated in figure 11 below. As a result of the multi-functional character of the water

resource, there is an intervention of a good number of public operators. Many ministerial divisions are concerned in the water sector: Ministry in charge of Energy, Ministry of Livestock, Ministry of Agriculture, Ministry of Fisheries, Ministry of Environment, Ministry of Health, Ministry of Industry, Ministry in charge of Equipments and Transport, Ministry of Territorial Administration, Ministry of Finance, and Ministry in charge of Civil Protection.

Other actors (the private sector, NGOs and the community in general) are not part of the institutional framework in the strict term but play an important role in the mobilization and the management of the water resources in Cameroon. The Global Water Partnership[41] Cameroon, study offices and diverse companies are also involved in the realization of water installations. Multi-lateral and bi-lateral organisations play an essential role in the realization of water infrastructures by giving financial and/or technical support to the water sector as a whole.

2.2.1 Mutations in the Water Sector: From SNEC to CAMWATER

The activities for the supply of potable water by the state are exercised by the Ministry of Water and Energy, the Cameroon National Water Supply Company (SNEC). After a long period of instability, the restructuring policy of the water sector put in place by the Cameroon government (decree n°2005/493 of 31 December 2005) seems to be a gradual solution to solving water problems. In effect, this restructuring has had as consequence the creation of a public sector; the Cameroon Water Utilities Corporation (CAMWATER) and on 2nd May 2008 la Camerounaise Des Eaux (CDE) which officially replaced SNEC (Société Nationale des Eaux du Cameroun) which until then had been the monopoly in the production and supply of potable water in Cameroon.

The Ministry of Water and Energy was created by degree n° 2004/320 of 8 December 2004 having as mission; the elaboration of plans and strategies in matters of energy and water and secondly the prospection, research and exploitation of water in towns and villages. SNEC created on the 28th May 1967 within the framework of leasing for a period of 40 years was in charge of carrying out all production, transportation, distribution and commercialization activities in urban and suburban zones in Cameroon. SNEC before its reorganization managed

[41] The Global Water Partnership (GWP) is an international network created to foster an integrated approach to water resources management (IWRM). The Network currently comprises 13 Regional Water Partnerships and 84 Country Water Partnerships, and includes more than 2,800 institutional Partners located in 169 countries.

105 centres covering 90% of the total urban population of the country. It had 225,000 subscribers supplied by a 90million m^3/ year sold. Faced with serious problems especially in 2002, SNEC had to be privatized and a public private partnership (PPP) adopted under the form of leasing.

CAMWATER and CDE

Created in 2005, CAMWATER is a public company placed under the technical sector of the Ministry of Water and Energy and financially under the Ministry of Finance. CAMWATER has as objective; plannification, realization of studies, mastery of infrastructures, research and the management of finances. Secondly carry out construction, maintenance and the management of production, storage and transport of potable water infrastructures. In addition, while cooperating with exploitation companies (CDE etc), inform and sensitize water users of the public service and water hygiene in urban and suburban areas. And generally manage all commercial, industrial, mobile, immobile and financial operations attached directly or indirectly to the above mentioned objectives.

CDE is a company created by a private Moroccan group specialized in the realization of potable water and sanitary infrastructures, thus CDE is involved in the distribution of potable water in suburban and urban areas (fig 11).

These two operators are linked by a contract, CDE will pay to its partner a regular sum and the investments to be realized by CAMWATER will depend on that. The regular sum to be paid does not constitute the only source of income for CAMWATER as this public company could obtain funds from international bodies as is currently the case with credit from the Chinese government (EXIMBANK-China), the American Agency for Commerce and Development (USTDA), the World Bank, Agence Française de Développement (AFD), European Investment Bank (EIB) and Japan. The government's strategy through the Ministry of Water and Energy in the supply of water in the rural areas has been mainly delegated to private enterprises, NGOs and associations. The financial contribution of these major partners in Cameroon potable water development is listed in box 6 below.

Box 6: Financing programme for the Cameroon potable water sector

Pour les centres équipés :

Le montant de FCFA 151 895 000 000 porte sur: - les études et plans directeurs hydrauliques : FCFA 3 425 000000 ; - le renouvellement et la réhabilitation des infrastructures existantes **:** FCFA 39620 000 000 ; - l**'**extension: FCFA 108 850 000 000

Pour les centres non équipés,

Le montant de **FCFA 84 017 280 000** couvre les études, l'élaboration des plans directeurs, la préparation des dossiers d'appel d'offres et les travaux. Des Bailleurs de Fonds et d'autres partenaires au développement tels que la Banque Mondiale, l'Agence Française de Développement (AFD), la Banque Européenne d'Investissement (BEI) et Eximbank-China, etc ont manifesté leur intérêt

- **La Banque Mondiale**

La Banque Mondiale a approuvé le crédit pour le projet ''eau potable et développement urbain'' d'un montant de 53,3 millions de DTS, équivalent de 80 millions de dollars US.

- **L'Agence Française de Développement** (AFD)

Elle s'est engagée à octroyer à la CAMWATER, sous garantie de l'Etat pour une durée de 15 ans avec différé de 5 ans, un financement de FCFA 26 Milliards pour les travaux de renforcement de la production d'eau potable à Yaoundé par la remise en service du Complexe Mefou - Messa, et la réhabilitation des stations dans les villes secondaires d'Edéa, Bertoua et Ngaoundéré.

- **La Banque Européenne d'Investissement** (BEI)

La BEI a promis le financement d'un montant de FCFA 26 Milliards pour couvrir, d'une part, les réhabilitations, extensions et le renforcement de réseaux dans les villes de Yaoundé et Douala, et d'autre part, les études générales portant sur l'alimentation en eau potable dans 32 centres de plus de 50 000 habitants, qui devront aboutir à la programmation, à la préparation et au montage des projets d'amélioration des infrastructures existantes.

- **Eximbank-China**

La Chine a manifesté une intention de financement d'un montant FCFA 11 Milliards, sous forme de prêt concessionnel au taux préférentiel de 2% remboursable sur 25 ans avec différé de 5 ans, pour le projet d'adduction d'eau potable adossée sur le fleuve Moungo, en vue de renforcer la production de Douala.

D'autres partenaires au développement ont annoncé leur intention d'accompagner CAMWATER dans ses projets sans déjà se prononcer sur les points d'affectation de leur financement. Il s'agit de :

- **L'Agence Américaine pour le Commerce et le Développement (USTDA)** qui a manifesté son intérêt pour l'assistance dans le cadre des études et de la planification des projets.

- **Le Japon** à travers des dons dans le secteur pour un montant global cumulé n'excédant pas FCFA 10 Milliards.

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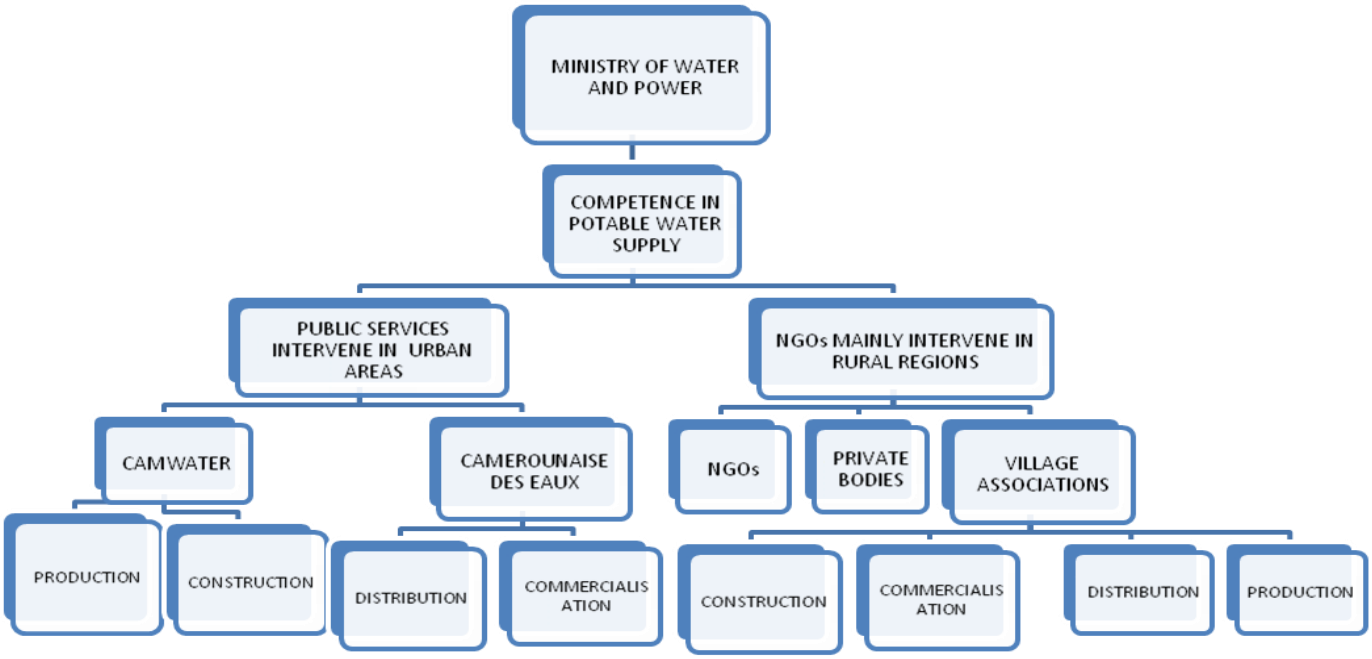
Il s'agit des projets suivants :

1. EBOLOWA : Ce projet vise à porter la production actuelle estimée à 2560 m3/j à 5870 m3/j à l'horizon 2020 pour faire face à la forte démographie de cette région dont le taux de croissance est de 3% par an. Le coût total des travaux est estimé à 3 479 000 000 F Cfa dont 869 750 000 F Cfa.

2.2.2 The Council: Decentralization accompaniment structures wanting

Councils have and are still currently being empowered in view of the decentralization process in Cameroon. Since they are at the lowest institutional level of the government, and are responsible for basic service provision to the communities which include sustainable water supply, use and management of water resources, their role in this domain is very important. The elaboration of a council water resource management policy and strategy as a step in water management dates back to the 1974 council law Article 1 and Cameroon Constitution Article 55. This provides the council with a strong legal instrument to negotiate with the supervisory authority and external support agencies and is therefore a step towards self-reliance and empowerment. It also facilitates the council's collaboration with different partners (civil society, private, NGOs, state) and can be used as a sensitization and coordination tool. For the moment, at the regional, divisional and sub divisional levels, no water policy and strategy exist which could give a framework and guide the municipal councils and their partners in Cameroon in the water and sanitation sector (Helvetas, 2004).

Figure 11: Organisation of the potable water sector in Cameroon



Source: Ngefor G.S.(2014)

In the multiple stakeholder approach developed by most donors, they aim at strengthening mainly the councils and their partners to effectively and efficiently play the leading role in the sustainable water resource management. Before the elaboration of any one project, donor agencies work in close collaboration with councils. They jointly develop the guidelines and tools to fit certain desired specific water resource policy and strategy of councils (including the council's water resource plans and bylaws). Based within the context of specific projects (local water projects) some rules have to be followed. Firstly all projects should follow council plans and bylaws laid down for WMC on village level which is finalized and validated by the council. An agreement of cooperation between the donor agency and the council, the consultant sends a letter of understanding, the general information sheet of a workshop (based on the project implementation) and questionnaires (for the councilors or WMC executives) at least one month before the workshop with the mayor of the concerned council. The mayor is responsible to invite and inform all the participants of the workshop, to organize the workshop itself, to distribute the questionnaires and collect them afterwards (at least one week before the workshop starts). The consultant and the mayor sign a contract after which the former writes the introduction and overview of the Council Water Management Policy and strategy" to be followed all along the implementation of the project. From the above analyses one will realize that there exist a careful and very formal organisation that precede local water supply projects which could be summarized as seen in the table below:

Table 11: The different steps followed by donor agencies and NGO's and the workshop programme plan before the construction stage of schemes

Stages	Tools	Workshop programme
1	Overview: suggested roles of the different stakeholders involved in the elaboration of the council WRMP &S	Day 1 An overview of the physical aspects WRM
2	Model contract between NGO and council: Agreement cooperation	A study of the project site
3	Letter of understanding	Day 2 An analysis of the WRMP guiding principles, objectives and strategic steps towards achieving the goals
4	General information sheet	Day 3 Highlighting stakeholder roles and responsibilities
5	Questionnaires destined to all stakeholders (Consultants, WMC-Executives, Counsillors, Mayor	Financial management and bookkeeping
6	MINAGI, MIMEE, MINATD, External support agencies)	Information and communication flow
7	Model contract between council and consultant	Bylaws for WMCs

Source: Helvetas and updated by author (WMC: Water Management Committee, WRMP&S: Water Resource Policy and Strategy, MINAGRI: Ministry of Agriculture, MINATD: Ministry of Decentralization and territorial Administration, MIMEE: Ministry of Water and Energy)

The subsection above provides guidelines and reference to tools used by trained consultants to coach councils in the elaboration of their WRMP&S in a participatory manner. Since the working principles of most NGOs are based on eventual local ownership, good governance and capacity building, it is important that from the beginning the leadership and the responsibility for the elaboration of the policy be in the hands of the councils. Therefore, the consultant acts as a coach rather than a leader to gain favour from the populations'. He/She occupies and advices the responsible persons and group of persons through all the phases, supports them with his/her special knowledge about water management and makes them familiar with concepts, methodologies and tools.

Council post-project quasi absence

As mentioned, the council is placed in the driving seat. Hence it is up to this body to decide what aspects of the water policy should be elaborated or modified. Care is taken to ensure that all documents prepared don't contradict existing laws, decrees, and regulations. A stepwise

analysis of the council collaboration in local water projects during the conception phase can seem overemphasized.

If much attention has been directed towards this conception phase it's because this institution is almost inexistent after the construction phase of the projects. It should even be noted that council post-project participation in local water projects today is a cause of real conflict. In cases where the population has been convinced to hand over the management of their water supplies to their local council, there has been the intervention of more influential national water institutions like Global Water Partnership Cameroon (GWP Cameroon) and FEICOM (Fond d'Equipement et d'Investissements des Communes). Worthy of mention is the fact that the handing over was only possible after the F*on's* reassuring speech to the population convincing them to accept assistance from the Kumbo Council. Possible hypotheses can be raised to understand the skepticism of the population which ranges from socio-political, cultural to economic. The economic and cultural dimensions will be developed in this subsection while the socio-political point of view will be analysed in subsequent sections of this study since it consist one core aspect underlying a possible Public-Private Community Partnership (PPCP) . The elaboration of the detailed activities of councils in local water projects above is to indicate that the pre-project involvement or collaboration of councils is always followed**.** The most interesting aspect of councils' activities is the difficulty to collaborate with WMC and the rest of the community during the post project phase.

After carrying out much research in this domain, there are perpetual questions that superficial reasoning will hardly give convincing answers to. Why do communities portray so much affinity to their water supplies? Is it actually the fear of paying excessive water bills as they put it or there exist some hidden explanation to their actions? To attempt an understanding we need to recall the definition of water governance (Baron, 2005, Gunningham, 2008) which brings out both formal and informal aspects that surround water management. We will be elaborating on these concepts in the next chapter. In addition the informal norms guide understanding of the representations that underlie water and water sources in the Western Highlands (It is necessary once more to indicate that this region still very much preserves their cultural values or identity. This region in Cameroon has the highest number of intertribal wars which in almost every case is closely linked to claims over land and water sources). The behaviour of communities towards external partners could be understood if one was to review De Benoist's (2004) discourse on identity. He puts forward that,

"…identity is directly related to certain moral values, which means that the self can only exist in relation with the good"[42].

He implies that, relation to a cultural group sets the framework of an identity that that group will always want to protect. The refusal or resistance of the population to cede their water supplies can be explained by the fact that these communities seem to cede alongside a certain degree of autonomy and liberalism. Modernity tries to allow individuals to free themselves from fixed social roles and traditional identities by promoting the ideal of individual autonomy (De Benoist, 2004). In the communities studied, one will realize that contrary to De Benoist's further analyses where he proposes *"freedom is in contradiction to culture*" freedom is in close relation to culture. The populations of Bali and Kumbo will not break away from their identity (their water sources) for fear of losing their freedom (freedom of performing rites to their gods around their water sources, freedom of not paying imposed water bills over their water supplies).

Baron (2005) while attempting a definition of water governance highlights the fact that these aspects be taken into consideration in management policies (that is, water as a patrimony). In the long run the problem remains and recalls questions as how can such communities (heterogeneity) be provided with sustainable and potable water. We analyzed this reasoning of managing sustainable schemes and creating partnerships by looking at the different partnerships that existed and still exist with some major NGOs in Cameroon.

2.2.3 Community water projects led by NGOs: analysis of their approaches

The supply of portable water to both urban and rural areas in Cameroon after independence was the responsibility of the Ministry of Mines, Water and Power and the Community Development Department (CDD). Also active were such foreign organizations as SCANWATER, Cooperation for American Relief Everywhere (CARE), Cameroon Industrial and Civic Contractors (CIACC) and Swiss Association for Technical Assistance (SATA-HELVETAS) (Nforba et al 1997). Nforba et al also indicate that many of the estimated 7000 water systems constructed in the rural areas in Cameroon, have gone out of operation or abandoned to ruin long after the project completion. The existence of NGOs being the main water supply actors in rural areas in Cameroon could be traced as far back as the 1960s. They

[42] Benoist (De) A. (2004), On Identity, *Elements*, 113, Juin-Aout,33-38

attribute the causes to be linked to "poor planning and management and in particular, the failure to involve the local population in all phases of the project. Effective participation would have helped to guarantee continuity after the projects' completion" (Nforba et al 1997). Projects in which the government operates and administers are far less successful than those, which treat communities as the future managers and involve them directly in the process.

Nevertheless, there are continuous arguments that not all projects were bad. Some projects carried out by institutions promoting a better supply of potable water to the rural areas, such as CDD and SATA-HELVETAS have been the most successful. Their projects emphasize self-help and the involvement of the members of the community throughout the various phases. Once the project is handed over, the community assumes responsibility for managing the water system. We shall look at a couple of community water supply projects in Cameroon and analyze the successes and the failures in terms of their involvement of the local population particularly the youth.

- **State delegation of rural water supply to NGOs and private agencies**

The Hague Declaration on participation in water resource management as quoted in UNEP (2001) states "government's role is not reduced, and remains pivotal in supporting local inclusion e.g. education/capacity building, monitoring and in producing enforceable regulations…" Support from higher levels of government is essential to the success of water resource management projects. When consensus or political support at the national level is weak, there is the greater possibility of project failure. As a sign of commitment to this international declaration, the Cameroon government created the Ministry of Mines and Water, the National Water Corporation SNEC – a para-statal whose activities are concentrated in the urban areas, the Rural Engineering Department (now defunct) and the Community Development Department to carry out its policy and has also participates in local water projects (See table 12) encouraged foreign organizations to provide potable water in the country as shown on the tables 12 and 13:

Table 12: Development organizations promoting local water supply in Cameroon.

CARE (International NGO)	CDD/SATA HELVETAS (International NGO)
143 Projects	347 Projects

Source: IRC (International Water and Sanitation Centre) 2011 online.

Table 13: Development in potable water supplies through the Rural Engineering Department of the Ministry of water and Energy

Operators	Water schemes realized
RURAL ENGINEERING (integrated in the Ministry of water and Energy	3900 Projects
CIACC (state managed)	30 Projects
SCANWATER (private Danish company) with a contract with the Cameroon government	335 projects

Source: IRC (International Water and Sanitation Centre) 2011 online. Total number of water projects: 4755

As further signs to show that the government favours community participation and NGO assistance, the Ministry of water and power issued policy statements and some guidelines for institutions operating in community water supply in Cameroon.

-Projects initiated by the local population shall continue to be operated and maintained by the population with the assistance of CDD/SATA-HELVETAS. The completed projects of SCANWATER and CIACC must be reorganized so that the local population becomes responsible for maintenance of the systems.

-Before any new project is carried out in a village, a sum of FCFA 135,000 must be paid by the population as a guarantee for the maintenance of the system.

-The population shall contribute to the realization of a water project through labour, funding and any other appropriate means.

-When a water supply system is completed it belongs to the members of the community for which it was meant and not to the government. Moreover, water operators shall be trained to guarantee the proper functioning of each system.

From the above analyzes we will realize that in a bid to meet the water needs of small towns and rural areas all the possible operators (public, private and NGO's) have existed in Cameroon. In every case it is important to note that some systems are more efficient than others. This relative success can be explained by the methods used by the different operators depending on the level of community's participation as we will be illustrating in the next section.

2.3 Comparing approaches in community water supply projects in Cameroon: Achievers or deceivers?

An analysis could be carried out on the results of the various approaches adopted by the four main different institutions that manage water resources at the community level in Cameroon by looking at their levels of involvement of the local population. Our assessment of the success cases will be combined because they seem to have similar approaches to water resource management.

2.3.1 SCANWATER: from outside to inside control – a catastrophic failure

SCANWATER, a private Danish company, by 1992, had built about 335 borehole water supply schemes in medium-sized villages and small towns in Cameroon (Lekunze 2001). The method used was mostly by pumping the water up into a reservoir, then distributed through public standpipes and a few private connections. A diesel-powered generator normally supplied power, but sometimes-electric pumps were used. Using the case of our previous studies (Ngefor, 2008) we understood that the SCANWATER approach failed due to two main reasons; the imported and imposed technology and the use of their engineers and technicians in all projects. Usually, SCANWATER projects trained an operator, hand over the project to the government and embark on other projects in the next village. Further until August 1988, the local community participation was not involved at any stage of the project. From the SCANWATER experience we can say that community participation is inevitable and highly preferable in local development. Meanwhile instead of the government to try to overcome this limit they went on maintaining the water systems at the expense of consumers.

Though the failure of SCANWATER projects were attributed to its strategy, it is also worth noting that the projects were realized in the depths of the economic crisis that affected all of sub-Saharan Africa, consequently, restoring the systems entailed a lot to the Cameroon government. To justify this, the World Bank, (1989) contend that this economic crisis which slowed down agricultural growth, poor export production, a decline in the industrial output, the disintegration of the productive and infrastructural facilities, deteriorating social indicators and institutions, increasing debt, public health and sanitation, affected education, housing and potable water.

As a result of the high cost of maintenance, the high number and dispersed nature of its installations, government decided to transfer all operation and maintenance costs to the beneficiaries. Meanwhile authors like Gordon and Gordon (1996) are convinced that the disengagement of the state played in favour of the process of participatory development in Africa by passing on some of its responsibilities to "*grassroot organizations that nurture rather than obstruct informal sector enterprises and that promotes Non Governmental Organizations (NGOs) and intermediary bodies"*. As such top-down development slowly gave way for more bottom-up approaches. Lekunze (2001) acknowledges the failure of SCANWATER approach and call for a change of paradigm, by putting in place water policies that delegate power to communities, through committees, for the management of water systems. Although the report raises more questions than it answers concerning the different levels of participation, it however illustrates that the main reason underlying the failure of SCANWATER systems little or no community participation.

2.3.2 CIACC: from top down to community-managed

The approach used by the Cameroon Industrial and Civic Contractors (CIACC) in its water scheme were similar to that of SCANWATER. CIACC was a water construction company of Dutch origin based in Cameroon. It received support from the Vermeer contractors group in the Netherlands and was placed under the supervision of the Ministry of Mines, Water and Power in Cameroon. According to Lekunze (2001), CIACC constructed a total of 30 water systems in three different provinces without involving the community members; hence many of the systems became inoperative. Fleming (1991) argues that participation emphasizes the role of the community in decision-making. His view is supported by Cornia et al´s (1987) who claim that such participation helps "*to improve the design of policies so that they correspond to the needs and conditions of the people for whom they are directed*".

In the case of CCIAC, one can also conclude that the non integration of communities in the conception, design, construction, maintenance, operation and management, of the water supply system led to their failure. Due to the failure of these two heavy projects the government saw the need to remedy this situation. Through the Ministry of Mines, Water and Power there was a reorganization of the water supply system through the creation of democratically elected village committees to participate in their water systems. However the

report had its limits because it did not clearly define the different roles and categories of people to be elected into committees. With the creation of the committees, and with the aim of constructing more sustainable schemes, the Ministry of Water, Mines and Energy went further by signing contracts between the village and the government.

Lekunze (2001) reveals that of the 335 Scanwater systems and 30 CIACC systems developed in Cameroon, over 90 percent are reported to be non-functioning. Though these two projects failed, one lesson is to be acknowledged, that both projects did not use an effective community partnership approach and that the young people who make-up a majority of the population were not actively associated (Lekunze, 2001). Meanwhile the failure had two main consequences; heavy financial losses and hopelessly on the part of the affected communities to access potable water and increased the incidence of water-borne diseases.

2.3.3 CARE International

Contrary to the first two cases, CARE International is referenced by IRC (International Water and Sanitation Centre, 1997) as one of the institutions that have applied the approach in the construction of rural water supply. CARE was originally designed by the United States to respond to the needs of Europeans after the Second World War, the `Cooperative for the American Renovating of Europe´ changed its name to `Cooperation for American Relief Everywhere, once the situation in Europe improved (Lekunze, 2001). CARE USA is a non Non- Governmental Organization (NGO) that promotes rural development. It started its activities in Cameroon in 1979 and currently operates in four provinces in different development fields. In addition to the construction of water supplies, it is also interested in health, environment, forestry, conservation, agriculture, the promotion of small and medium-sized enterprises, emergency aid, women and development, training and education sponsored by American organizations and the Dutch government.

In the area water development, CARE has so far constructed one water supply system in the Far North Region and 141 hand pump wells in the rural areas of the Eastern Region. CARE´s development approach implores some degree of community participation where each village wishing to benefit from CARE's assistance has to show its commitment by meeting the

following conditions: CARE´s Instruments of Community Participation in Water Resource Management as stipulated by the Ministry of water, mines and Energy, Cameroon, include:

An application to CARE for assistance.

A bank or post office account opened with at least 25,000FCFA for future maintenance

A down-payment of 150,000FCFA after the first field test has been carried out

Supply of sand and gravel by the village, if available

Readiness to dig from the ground level to the water level if the project is a well

Routine testing of water quality

Fencing of the well after completion

Provision of voluntary labour in the case of a large water supply system

The formation of a Water Maintenance Committee.

In return, the village gets the following services from CARE:

CARE carries out routine supervision and financial monitoring after handing the project over to the community and evaluates the communities effort

CARE takes over the construction of the well when the water level is reached and installs the rings and a hand pump imported from Canada

CARE trains the water operator or pump mechanic

CARE educates the users about water quality issues

Provides technical advice and support. (Lekunze, 2001)

2.3.4 SATA-HELVETAS- An active partnership

The Swiss Association for Technical Assistance (SATA-HELVETAS) applied the same participatory guidelines like CARE. According to the International Water and Sanitation Centre (IRC), SATA-HELVETAS the first works could be traced as far back as 1961 in Cameroon and it worked closely with the Community Development Department CDD of the Ministry of Agriculture. Its first engineers constructed 23 water points in the South west Region of Cameroon by 1963. Given this encouraging take off and the zeal of community members, an agreement was signed on the 29th of June 1964 between SATA-HELVETAS and the Cameroon government to extend SATA-HELVETAS' assistance to the whole of the country.

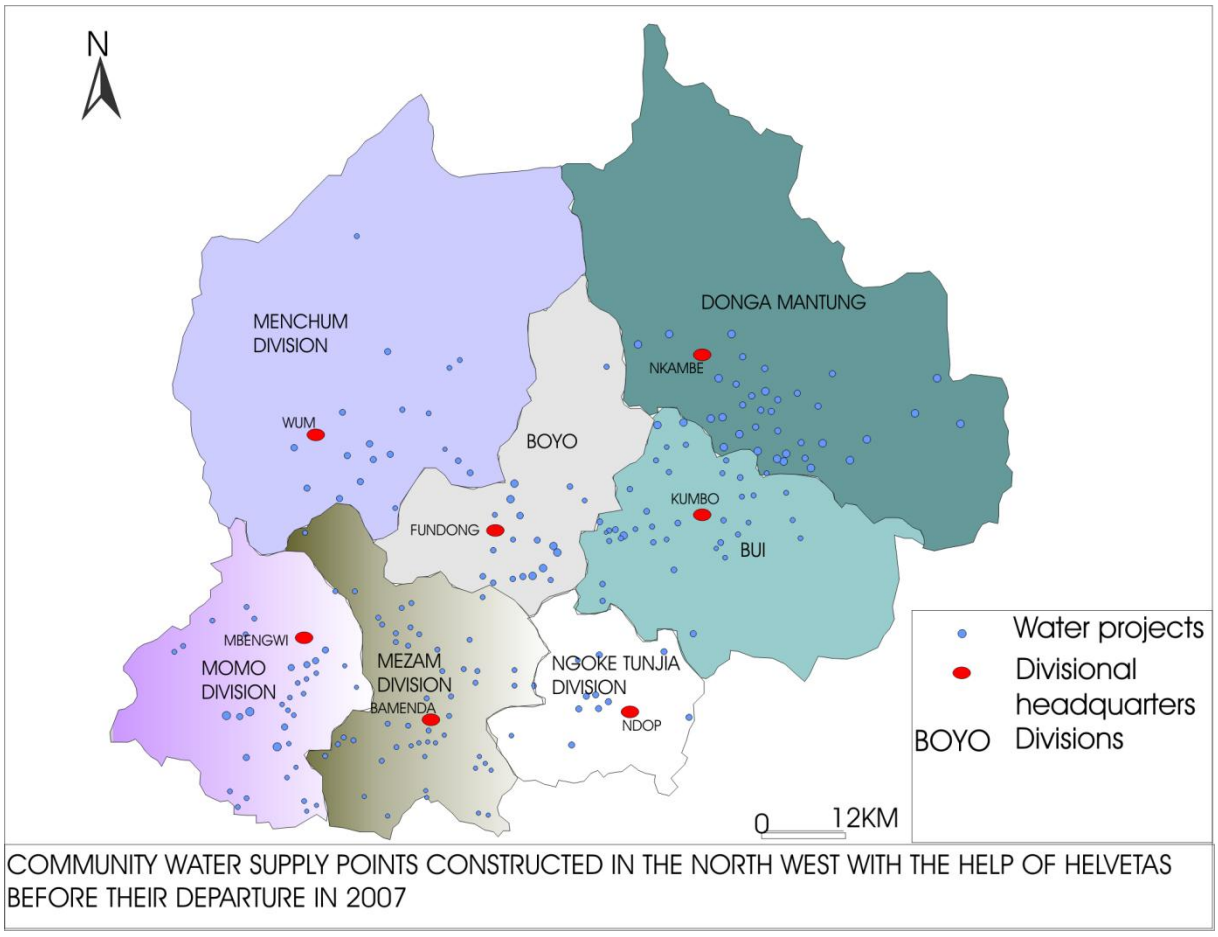
By 1994 SATA-HELVETAS had constructed 344 water points (Lekunze, 2001). In addition to its water construction activities, a Training Centre was set up in Kumba by SATA-HELVETAS where technical personnel were trained for different jobs: masons, water supply caretakers, building contractor, supervisor, technician, etc. By 1994, SATA-HELVETAS had trained a total of 189 caretakers and 446 water project maintenance committee members. Community Development Department (CDD) technicians and staff of non-governmental organizations (NGOs) also benefitted from training programmes on catchment protection and the maintenance of water systems.

The strategy to qualify for assistance was similar to that of CARE; some conditions were imposed to communities such as raising at least 30 percent of the project, at least 40 percent for the extension of existing water system, at least 50 percent for extensive repairs and communities had to ensure the entire post construction maintenance. With SATA-HELVETAS projects as reported by IRC community initiate the water project depending on their needs. It puts in place planning committees. There should be a body representing the whole community that is the General Assembly or the Representative Assembly which is also the highest decision-making body. After carrying out agreed designs, all community members contribute in cash, labour or kind to the project and maintenance in the long run. Maintenance committees elected from the local population are set up to ensure post project phase. The community engages a qualified caretaker (plumber) and an assistant. The committees have multiple functions, such as accounting, catchment protection, and follow-up. The water supply belongs to the community and to no one else. SATA-HELVETAS and CDD sensitized and educated the entire community; provided technical, financial and material support.

The participatory approaches adopted by CARE and SATA HELVETAS constructed more sustainable systems. Lekunze, (2001) indicates that out of the 142 hand pumps installed in the East Province by CARE, 136 do function well and so do the Water Committees while out of the 302 completed projects SATA-HELVETAS (see figure 12 and 13) only 33 (10 percent) are not functioning well. Nforba et al (1997) further state that "*Community management involves all the members of a community directly in all phases of a project, regard the project as their own, give it their support and continue to look after it*". The sustainability of project is a function of purpose and benefits of schemes to their respective communities.

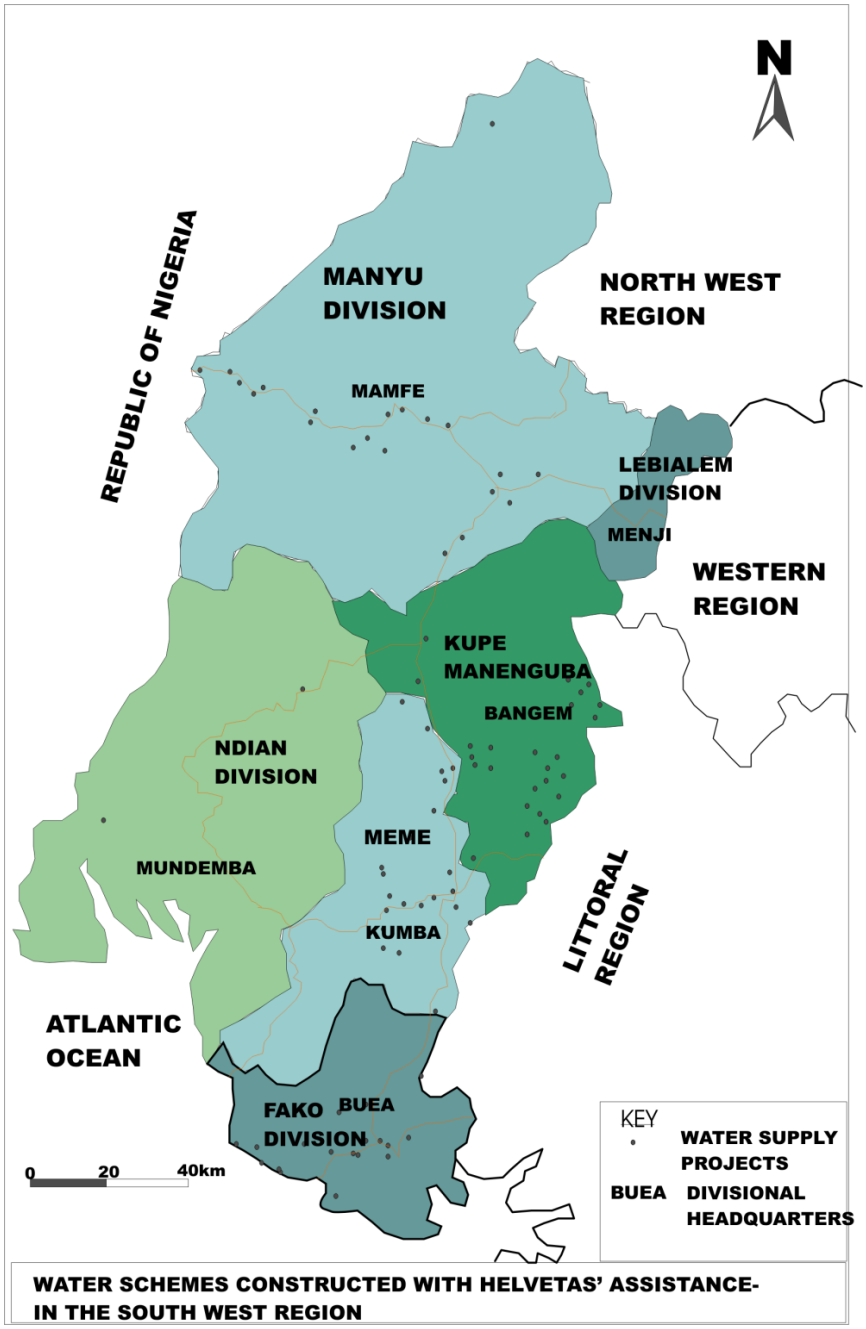
Thus, while the failure of CIACC, SCANWATER and the Rural Engineering Department projects can partly be attributed to the lack participatory approaches, the success of CARE and the CDD/SATA-HELVETAS-supported projects can, to a large extent, be attributed to the principles of community involvement, management sensitization, education and ownership, the failure of the of these elements. The SCANWATER and CIACC systems failed because the community could not come to the rescue with the belief that it was someone else's (the states) project and, besides, they had not been involved in planning a type of water system that they could sustain and did not receive the relevant training to maintain and manage the water supply.

Figure 12: Helvetas water schemes in North West Cameroon before their departure in 2007



Source: Ngefor G. S. (2014)

Figure 13: Helvetas water schemes in South West Cameroon before their departure in 2007



Source: Ngefor G. S. (2014)

The major reason for success or failure depends on the degree of participation of members of the community throughout the project. The question of ownership – who owns the improved water system? Is factor that should be clearly defined too because the contribution of community members to schemes owned by them can be very different to their contributions to state-owned schemes as was the case of the Rural Engineering Department. From the development approaches applied by these four different water construction structures in

Cameroon, it is obvious that the sustainability of water supply systems depends on the degree of involvement of the community members in all stages of the water project and in their preparation for self-management of the system after it has been completed. NGOs can play a significant positive role in local development, in the provision of some services, and can lobby government to provide greater services to local populations. In this light, Conyers (1990) affirms that

"…NGOs and especially local peoples organizations, can often provide a more participatory and responsive bases for development than any bureaucracy can ever hope to do…"

NGOs can thus act to provide collective ends but as Kassimir et al (2001) caution, they are themselves "*fields of power and authority*" and not merely collective actors supporting democracy. NGOs may have very negative effects on local democracy and therefore on the foundation of effective local development. NGOs can be seen as hindering the development of local governments, acting as a threat to their powerful position in the community. Furthermore, local NGOs are often approached by donors and international non-governmental and other organisations seeking to avoid working with the government. This deprives local representative government of valuable opportunities that could support its development and legitimacy (Smoke 1999). In addition Utting (1999) observes "grassroots peoples" organisations can be disturbed by NGOs dominating in local development. Etoungou (2001) learned from the vice president of a village that the village was told that an NGO was invited to follow their case, but "*we must say thanks to this NGO, we hope that it nevertheless understands that we can fly with our own wings".*

In Cameroon, there are questions as to the existence of these organizations as they say, be it unions, associations, co-operatives or NGOs, however, do not necessarily reflect the concerns of the village as a whole- particularly in matters concerning public resources. They are often treated as though they are representatives but they are not (Ribot, 2002). They represent their particular interest, and their representatives or leaders are accountable to their particular constituencies. There is no evidence that they defend the interest of communities. In addition, most leaders of these local movements or organizations are often self-appointed or sponsored by outside aid agencies or NGOs and are non representative (National Research Council 1992; Mazonde 1996; Guyer 1994). As Utting (1999) points out, *there is the need to ask who NGOs are accountable to, if indeed they are accountable.*

2.3.2.5 The blurry role of village heads, elites and village associations

"*In many instances it is the local elite rather than the most vulnerable that capture powers- which are then utilized to repress local minorities- including women and other marginal groups*" Oluwo (2001).

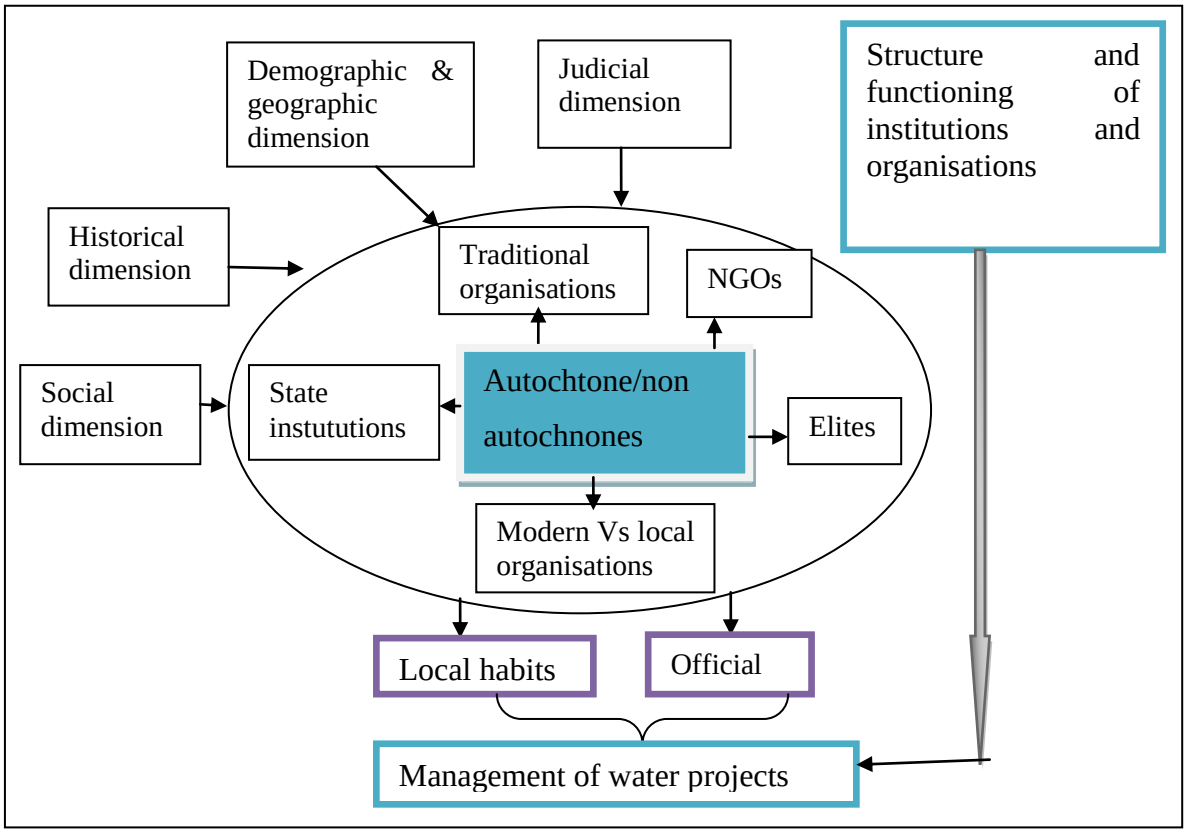
Elite capture has often been the end result of most local development projects and a major problem attributed to decentralization (Uttings 1999, Crook and Manor, 1998). Most attention has always been focused on the fact that elite capture takes place and on the configuration of the locally stratified and authoritative landscape. Fewer questions are however asked on the role of the government and elites deviating common resources for individual interests. The question that needs to be asked is: How can local elites be rendered more accountable and how can the State reduce the powers of these intermediaries? It is rather pessimistic especially in the case of Cameroon where chiefs for example are considered as auxiliaries of the government. Consequently these chiefs exist and in every one situation rally a good number of actors (nominated WMCs members, VDA members, secret society members) around them with whom they manage local resources. As Ribot (2002) indicates, *"conceding powers to local governments is no guarantee that all local interest groups will be represented in local politics. It may simply mean that power is transferred from national to local elites"*.

The elite capture question being a corner stone in this study to explain undemocratic practices and the failure of most community water projects is quite problematic. Contrary to the above proposal of government scrutiny of local actors, there is also the fact that the government on one hand constitutes the backbone to these adverse actions. Ribot holds that, state resources are allocated along lines of political and economic alliances between state actors and the networks they need, to maintain their political base. Such cases can be seen whereby the Fon of Bali in the early 1990s wanted to cede the Bali community water under state control in exchange for a parliamentary post. This situation generated widespread antagonism and resistance in the village (Fokwang, 2003, 2005).

In sum, we need to better understand the roles of central and local forces in creating the elite capture problem, its magnitude, its effects and potential solutions. As Oluwo (2001) argues, local elites are needed for the success of local government systems, at the same time, they must not be allowed to exclude the masses of the people–otherwise serious problems of equity, responsiveness and corruption at the local level are raised. The "elite capture"

problem, however, leads Crook and Sverrisson (2001) to conclude that *"central intervention is nearly always needed to ensure progressive or pro-poor outcomes "*. Ironically, we need to also recognize the important role of this same central intervention in cultivating this problematic elite.

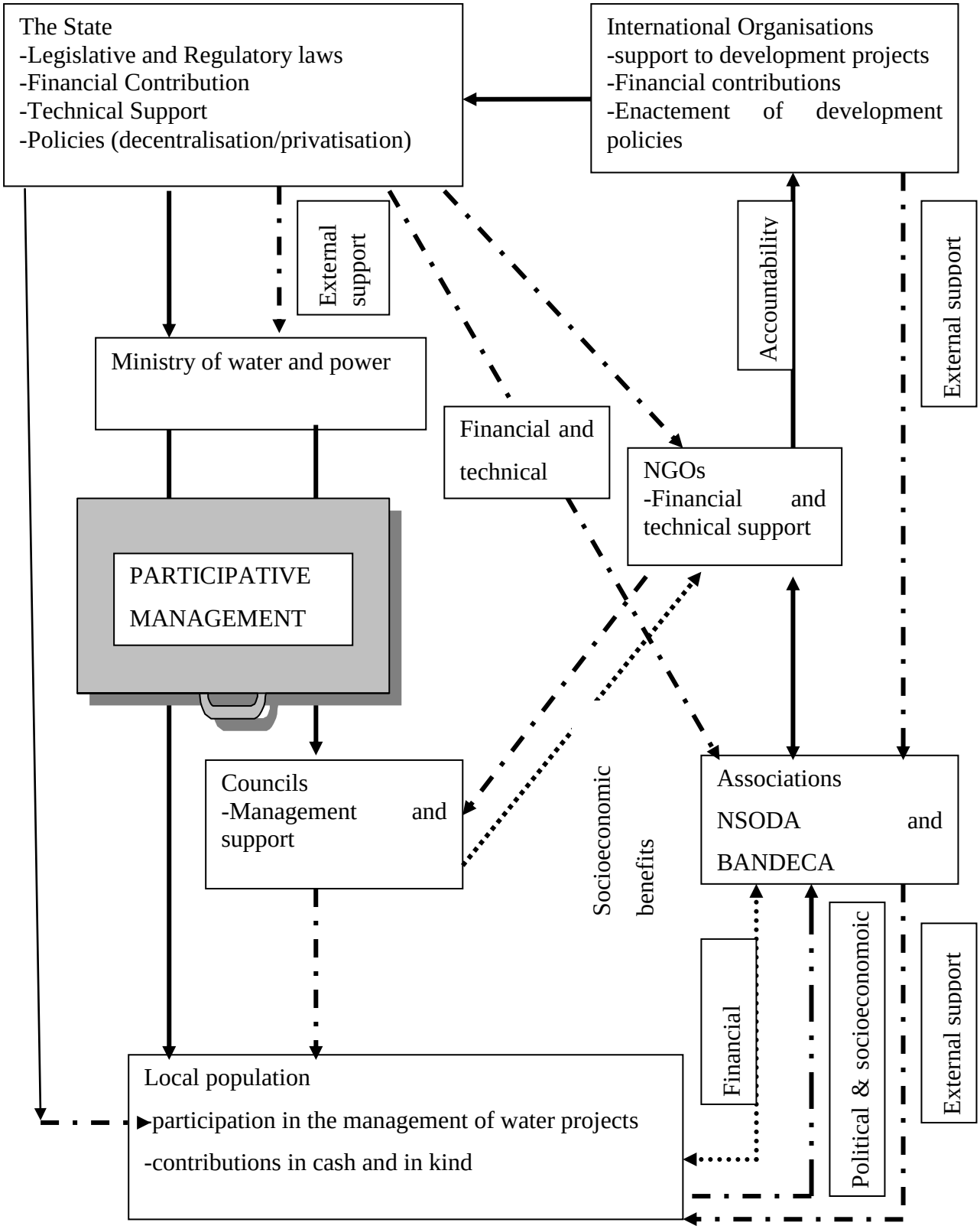
Figure 14: Actors and interactions in the Local Arena



Source: Ngefor G. S. (2014)

This local scene operates within a larger context which can be observed as summarized in the figure below

Figure 15: Actor interactions in local water management



Source: Ngefor G. S. (2014)

Conceptualizing power and elite capture

Literature offers two approaches to deal with issues of elite capture: counter and co-opt-elite. The 'counter-elite' approach advocates challenging elites by completely excluding them in the institutional design. It assumes that all elites are bad in nature. By raising public awareness of power inequalities and building local capacity, this approach suggests that community empowerment and political citizenship would be effective in resisting elite domination (Hickey and Mohan 2004).

The "pro-elite" approach, in contrast, suggests that cooperation with elites, rather than confrontation, is the solution to alleviating poverty. It asserts that not all elites are bad, and some of them can play a constructive role in community development. It also assumes that power is not a "zero-sum" game and a pragmatic use of elites' networks and resources can be beneficial to poor communities. The notion of the "benevolent elite" by Platteau and Abraham (2002) fits into this school of thought. Their definition highlights the subjective dimension of elite capture and suggests how elites command "moral superiority" (Higley and Burton 2006) to make their claims. However, her definition is not complete because elites are dependent on non-elites. In Fumanti's word, elites come to power "through *publicly* recognized merit, inheritance, or even force" (Fumanti 2004: 2).

According to Beard and Phakphian (2009), elites are: "individuals who can exert *disproportionate* influence over a collective action process". Elite capture is a situation where elites manipulate the decision-making arena and agenda and obtain most of the benefits. In explaining elite domination, Platteau (2004) suggests four factors: disparate access to economic resources, asymmetrical social positions, varying levels of knowledge of political protocols, and different education attainment in some cases (p. 223). Their power is perpetuated through land holdings, family networks, employment status, wealth, political and religious affiliation, personal history and personality.

Elites can also be analyzed from the temporal and spatial perspectives. Higley and Burton (2006) suggest that the influence of elites is not "one-off", but is usually "continuous, regular and substantial". Their influence is not confined to their own communities. Elites make use of their intricate networks to occupy various locations of authority and to "scale-up" their power from community to regional and national level. Lay people often follow their leadership more or less unconsciously or even consciously if they are as in most cases obliged to.

The dynamism of elite domination can be demonstrated by a process of "elite continuity, transformation and replacement" through which elites cooperate, compete and reconcile their differences from time to time. This non-linear development makes the solution to elite capture proposed by Platteau and Abraham (2002) plausible. They claim that elite control can be minimized by heterogeneous representation of elites, and that would be '*sufficiently diversified for a division of opinions to development among them'* (p. 124). The collaboration of elites in power sharing, however, reduces the effectiveness of the divide-rule.

2.3.2.6 Difficult role of the state to coordinate

The Western Highlands just like any other part of the country is supposedly supplied by SNEC (the National Water Corporation). SNEC's efforts were limited to urban and suburban zones with population sizes of at least 5000 while the rural milieu witnessed frequent epidemics of water borne diseases as a result of inefficient health and sanitary infrastructure and water accessibility problems. Striking examples of water epidemics in the North West region include the cholera epidemic in Nkwen in 1987 (Ngefor, 2008).

Serious water accessibility problems started being noticed in these regions in the 1960s and 1970s provoked by rapid population increase and urban growth. This double expansion led to an increase in the demand for lands as farmlands and urban fringe activities while also putting pressure on water resources. The major consequence of the rapid population growth on water resources was felt by the drastic increase in the pollution of potable water sources as settlements drew closer to water supply points. Persistent and dangerous water borne diseases witnessed in different zones at different periods constituted the main cause of awareness as concerns the hygiene and sanitary conditions of the population. Bearing in mind the fact that public intervention in the supply of potable water in the region was limited to big and average towns, the population in the rural areas had to develop strategies to solve their water problems. The idea of a common objective brought about the community initiative and the proliferation of small local water supply points which in most cases was supported by international NGOs and the local councils. Although the community water initiative only became popular in Cameroon in the 80s, it can be traced as far back as the 60s with the arrival of international NGOs like HELVETAS (Swiss Association for International Corporation).

It was in 1961 when Helvetas (in those days known as SATA, Swiss Association for Technical Assistance) started its development cooperation in the then Anglophone Federal State, West Cameroon. Swiss relations in Cameroon through the Basel Mission (now Presbyterian Church) is more ancient and it is believed that they encouraged Helvetas in the provision of potable water in rural regions. In 1961 still, SATA sent the first technician to Kumba (a town in the South West Region of Cameroon) to explore the construction of simple potable water points for communities. A couple of year later, a first agreement was signed between SATA and the then West Cameroon (Anglophone) Government in view of creating partnerships with the newly created Community Development Department (CDD), encourage self-help initiatives to improve the living conditions of the rural population, focusing mainly on drinking water, farm-to-market roads, bridges and other basic social amenities.

After the contract with the West Cameroon government, three SATA water engineers were stationed in Kumba, Mamfe and Bamenda, to start up water projects in close collaboration with different villages and the local CDD Offices. The lack of qualified Cameroonian technical staff led to the establishment of the BTC, Building Training Centre, in Kumba, to train technical craftsmen like masons, plumbers, carpenters and providing advanced courses in project supervision and maintenance (Lekunze, 2001).

With increase demand for water in villages, the programme expanded rapidly. New Swiss water engineers were engaged in Ndu and Victoria (present day Limbe). With the reunification of the two federated states into the United Republic of Cameroon in 1972 they extended their activities to Bafoussam and Yaoundé in the Francophone part. Unfortunately, the CDD-philosophy never gained a successful foothold in the French speaking regions of the country.

Discouraged from the fact that they never really succeeded in the francophone parts in addition to the difficulties they were facing their agreements with the Ahidjo government Helvetas concentrated its interventions and assistance mainly to the water sector in the North West Province and transferred the programmed director’s office from Yaoundé (Capital of the Republic of Cameroon) to Bamenda. They developed new partnerships, first with some Non Governmental Organisations (NGOs) and especially with local councils. This led to a new Council Support Programme (CSP) which in the recent times has become very successful and strengthened the ownership of the water projects in the communities. After 45 years of work

in Cameroon, Helvetas withdrew leaving behind 550 (figures 12 and 13) water schemes of which more than 80% (about 440 water projects) are found in the North West Region (See figure 12). This number when added to water projects supported by other NGOs and partners gives a total of a good number of projects found especially in the North West Region of Cameroon.

Conclusion

It is noted that increasingly, significant responsibilities for local water resource policy and planning are being delegated to local authorities and NGOs. This decentralization of water management is consistent with the government's local governance reform, which includes the reforms to regional and municipal administrations. Based on the national water policy, many government institutions hold different responsibilities with regard to water however; coordination and cooperation among them are still limited. The complex institutional set up at the national level also inhibits participatory decision making. For instance, the Cameroon water sector lies across ministries; this is a barrier that limits the participation of many actors in the governance process.

In addition, deference to political and administrative power is embedded in the Cameroonian society, where local leaders are known to villagers. This kind of power interaction reflects the challenges that state authorities also face regarding the implementation of rules and regulations. This complexity can be solved only by the effective involvement of local authorities such as municipalities in the water management. Their involvement such as in the case of Kumbo eases the operation however; the distinction between the "state" (municipalities) and the non-state community-based association becomes even more blurred.
In theory, municipalities hold a legitimate role in managing community water supplies, but do not have the power to regulate and manage water resources. It was observed that at the scheme and catchment levels, municipalities' legal and administrative responsibility over schemes is not effective for many reasons including limited power and authority, limited support funds, inadequate capacity and lack of human resources. Additionally, there are few accountability mechanisms in the state governance structure, resulting in low levels of trust and poor public service delivery for most communities. In many schemes, municipalities have

abandoned their duties and even their interests. Local development in general and community water management present serious governance challenges for many stakeholders in Cameroon. Government agencies, development organizations and the private sector all have a role to play, yet their roles and responsibilities are not always well defined.

Conclusion of Part 1

In this part of our work we stipulate one of the main questions and assumptions of the dissertation, and explain the evolution of the potable water sector in Cameroon with particular attention to the roots of community water development. This part had two main objectives: firstly we aimed at understanding the customary laws that guided water governance in the pre-colonial era and how the present actors in the Cameroon potable water sector came about. Chapter 1 is guided by questions about what had existed and what is new in the theory and practice of community development in Cameroon. Secondly it aimed at discussing how these developments stand in historical and comparative perspective between the different parts (Anglophone and Francophone) of the country. We also showed that, water management in pre colonial Cameroon already had multidimensional meanings. Water had many meanings and relationships attached to it. The community development projects of the 1960‘s and 1970‘s provide several points of contrast to the present, while it is also useful to study how the past is remembered in the present. Recent historical studies of community also enable comparisons between the present and past. Similarly, the understanding of what is distinctive about the present situation in Cameroon is usefully informed by comparisons with the two periods.

In addition we intended tracing the roots of community development in Cameroon. In this light we think that the British Government greatly influenced the Anglophone part of Cameroon to understand the community by mobilizing funds for managing and maintaining water supplies from community members. Meanwhile the French Colonial Cameroon’s water governance was mechanized and centralized, with very little or no role for local water users/communities. In both parts of Cameroon developing water as a resource was considered critical to the new forms of power. Thus, increasingly, state control over water led to a new framework of control over the local “communities”.

Chapter 2 frames fragmentation in the Cameroon water sector as a strong element of the interaction of political and legal institutions that hold or assign authority in the territory. This framing seeks to contribute to the conceptualization of jurisdictional and institutional fragmentation in the Cameroonian context. Based on this view, this chapter defined jurisdictional and institutional fragmentation within the Cameroon context and analyzed its multi-level and multi-scalar dimensions. The analysis then explored in detail two key nodes of fragmentation- legal institutions and administrative-executive institutions.

Moreover, the chapter explored the relevance of the challenge of balancing integration and fragmentation in the water governance and management literature. The chapter then presented a summary of the characteristics and implications of jurisdictional fragmentation for governance to describe and explain the different types of governance patterns that emerge (these patterns will be analyzed with the three cases in part 3) in response to jurisdictional fragmentation. The chapter then examined the foundation of jurisdictional fragmentation in Cameroon, the division of powers since colonial times and show how it has evolved toward multi-level governance. At the core of the integration-fragmentation challenge is the question of the appropriate degree of centralization of power (and authority in decision making) and the appropriate scale of decision-making. Sometimes centralized decision-making is appropriate; other times it should be distributed. As such, there is a need to refine and rethink the way in which key stakeholders relate to each other and make decisions on the use of water. In the next section of our work we used the concepts of *governance* and *community* to ease our understanding of the complexity of the actors and their interactions in the Cameroonian water sector.

PART II

A CONCEPTUAL UNDERSTANDING OF "GOVERNANCE" AND "COMMUNITY": INTERACTION PROCESSES AND STEERING MECHANISMS

Introduction

As with all institutional matrices, actually existing resource governance in Cameroon rarely involves a single actor, displaying instead a mixture of state and traditional characteristics. Water resources, moreover, might be governed through two or more overlapping (and potentially competing) actors. The case of small town community water governance explored throughout this thesis offers a prime example of such overlap, as community systems exist alongside the public municipal network and are technically within the territory of the public concession. Despite these obvious limitations, we have highlighted the dominant rationales informing water governance decisions in putatively post neoliberal Cameroon. Water governance is shaped in part by neoliberal legacies, in the form of decentralizing and multicultural and national policies.

To think conceptually about the impact of these tendencies on water governance, I present a conceptual framework. This framework will help distinguish between state, market, and community water governance, but it attempts to capture underlying variation in purpose and regional (Cameroonian) specificities. In the subsequent chapters, I will address the reality of co-existing public and community actors by looking at the concepts of "governance" and "community". The elaboration will also deal with a regime theory on the interaction between actors while taking into account the domain of collective property. I will return to the patterns explored here in Chapters 5, 6 and 7 where I consider the varieties of the three case studies of this dissertation.

CHAPTER 3

CONCEPTS OF WATER GOVERNANCE: FRAGMENTATION AS A PROBLEM

Introduction

The complexity of the Cameroon society and its water sector pushes us to understand the water problems within a wider context; that of governance. All along in our problem statement, we present the roles of stakeholders, relationships and perspectives with respect to Cameroonian water resources management, with a specific focus on community water supplies. In our introductory chapter we survey the human dimension in the history of water governance in Cameroon, to discover the various institutional aspects of the governance concept. We already find primitive forms of water governance before the colonial era. We used the term 'water governance' for collective action to address water issues in Cameroon.

Water governance in a more centralized form appeared around 1960, at the eve of independence. That was the beginning of the public domain, which mostly dealt with the engineering of large water works (chapter 1). In the late 1980s and 1990s the traditional approach of water engineering became criticized. New stakeholders entered the arena around water policy making, which politicized water engineering. Since then, the human dimension of water governance became more apparent (chapter 2). In the 1990s society became aware of the limits to human control. The human dimension of water governance points at several institutional aspects of the governance concept that we touch in preceding chapters. In chapters 3 and 4 of this dissertation we deal with a more specific elaboration of the governance and community concepts. We will elaborate more on the concepts and how we want to use it for our research. In these chapters we want to abstract from the described evolution of water governance a few issues, which we think matter for a governance theory. Our analysis will centre on five main issues; levels, perspective, property, participative, and steering issue.

3.1 Conceptual perspective

Our focus in this work is about water institutional changes and fragmentation in Cameroon and the need for coordination. The chapter begins by looking at how the terms governance,

partnership, network and property regime are understood in the governance literature and it explains the use of resource regime theory in this context. We will view the concepts of governance in relation to the others as interdependent, continuing interactions between network members and game-like interactions rooted in rules negotiated by the network. Our interest in the governance concept emphasizes the reduced capacity of government to 'steer' but also the involvement and participative action by private stakeholders and communities. In addition we are interested in collective action, but also in the complexity of the institutional context in which collective action is embedded and achieved. The focus on institutional change is to analyze the controversy of the Cameroon water governance presenting problematic relations among water, human rights and legal pluralism. As the previous chapter indicates, there has been a gap between the rights and the practical issues of water allocation focused more on small-scale water or socio-political spaces, mainly at the level of water users' and communities. We will with an elaboration of the concept of governance then water governance and the elements that constitute a water governance structure? While understanding the role of the state as an important actor, we will also be looking at the role of non-governmental actors in collective action with respect to water issues. Particular interest will be based on the multi-level and multi-actor aspects of collective action. Moreover, we will seek to understand the role of property rights in water governance, especially the limits between the public and private and community domain.

This chapter will also provide a review of the literature to demonstrate how institutional processes fail in everyday contexts and areas of overlap between institutional arrangements. Dominant theoretical approaches to understanding institutions are examined to illustrate the need for a radical change and new thinking on relationships between institutions, property rights and power. This calls for new forms of governance that address issues of power and the consolidation of marked dichotomies between local (communities) and national and the formal and informal processes. After having identified the different elements that make up the governance structure, we will focus on the multi actor issue of water governance and the different governance patterns.

3.1.1 Governance a variety of context

From a political science point of view governance has been discussed in terms of "governability". Meanwhile it is necessary to refer to the distinction made by Foucault (1991) between government and "governmentality" that can truly explore these differences while reintroducing issues of power and domination. According to Foucault (1991, 1997, 2000) governmentality on the one hand is "*a group consisting of institutions, but also the procedures, analyzes, reflections and tactics that allows the exercise of a specific form of power that targets the population [...] to a specific form of political economy, and technical security"* on the other hand*, it refers to the* prominence of this type of power that can be called "government". The 'governmentalization of government' refers to a continual critique of the authority and ability of governments to govern (Foucault, 1991; Cleaver, 2001). It demands that the means of government be supervised and subjected to the logic of the market, by which the governmental field of action is to be regulated, evaluated, and codified. Second, paraphrasing Karren Bakker, neoliberalization claims to respond to circumstances that already exist when it is, in fact, instrumental in their creation (Bakker, 2007). These are then "tactics" of government that at every given moment to define what should be left to the state without raising the question of what is public and what is private.

This notion allows Foucault to distinguish between power, as "*strategic games between individuals*" that lead to "*govern each other*" and domination as submission and referring to the hierarchical power structure. Power to him can be vaguely conceived as a unitary system, organized around a center which is at the same time the source and supported by its internal dynamics. During the 1980s "governability" gave way to governance, defined as re-designing or re-adjusting public administration. Definitions of governance abound. Dale et al (2002) give a useful starting point for defining governance, suggesting that it "*centres on the management of complex interdependencies among many different actors – individuals, corporations, interest groups, nation states – all of whom are involved in interactive decision making regarding issues that affect everyone's welfare*." According to Kuks (2004), *governance involves the structures and processes by which societies share power and shapes individual and collective actions including laws, regulations, discursive debates, negotiation, mediation, conflict resolution, elections, public consultations, protests, and other decision-making processes.*

At local and national levels, increasing privatization, public and private partnerships and decentralization of water management (including management by user groups) and services delivery are significant trends of new forms of governance in both developing and developed countries. The factor common to all is that they search for forms of coordination that do not fit comfortably with the market-hierarchy distinction (Bied-Charreton, 2006).

In the subsequent sections our analyses will be based on four main issues (levels, property rights, participation and steering). We will start by viewing the elements that make up a governance structure? Secondly, how changes in these elements influence each other? Finally, we will present how these elements of governance relate to each other, including the multi-scale issue.

3.1.2 Elements of governance: Stakeholders need accompaniment

The actors (or institutions) that deliver public or collective goods and services are becoming more numerous, especially in Africa. Modes of governance are becoming very diversified. On the one hand, because of the importance (economic weight) of development agencies in the implementation and financing of public policies: developmentalist governance takes place alongside the state governance (both also often overlap). On the other hand, as mentioned above, an increasing number of non-state actors now deliver public or collective goods and services, such as private enterprises and associations. Thus, there is no longer any public service which does not include in different degrees the involvement of the following: the state administrative services, development agencies (NGOs and international agencies), the 'community' (from associations to the municipal council) and private operators ". From Dale et al (2002) and Kuk's (2004) definitions of governance that we have proposed, they give a unique and extensive field research scope of governance elements involving: (1) all state and non-state institutions, at all levels, introducing the *multi-level* question , (2) their relationship with their public, their clients, their citizens; the *multiactor* character (3) on the national or local implementation of public actions, regardless of the actors who design, implement or use these public actions; *multifaceted* issue (4) the differences and discrepancies between official standards for the issue of public goods and services and collective practices and standards that regulate the behavior of those in charge of this issue, bringing in the *multi-instrumental* question.

We will develop our four elements though different approaches including but not limited to the institutional approach, regime's theory, conflict and power and civil society participation. The concept of governance is necessarily plural: there has never, even in a centralized, collective economy under a despotic state, one form of governance. This pluralism can be understood by viewing different modes of governance. In this light we will use the above four entry points in our analysis of the governance concept. We believe that using these four elements, the governance pattern can be described a any field in a specified place and time. But what should be described within the framework of these four elements? Which questions (or indicators) can operationalize these elements (or dimensions)? The governance literature itself gives no clear answer yet. In the next sections, we describe these four elements of governance in more detail.

The institutional approach (Agrawal, 2001; Ostrom 1990) draws attention to the way in which actors enter the policy network or are excluded from it. Furthermore, Ostrom (1990) also distinguishes between different levels of analysis. This layered structure is not the same as a classification of administrative layers. A compromise between both interpretations of the term level is to speak about levels within a concept of multilevel governance. This implies that often the administrative bodies with a larger scaled domain will set rules that form a context for more operative decision making in smaller domains, next to some decisions that can be regarded as directly operative.

These four elements raise important questions that guide governance debates. Through these questions we will be looking at the policy arena in theory and practice, who are those actually involved, and what exactly are their tools? What is the accepted role assigned to government? Who has relevant ownership and use rights? What are the target groups of the policy, and what is the timing of its application? How much flexibility do the instruments provide? What authority and other resources are made available to these organizations by the policy?

In the next section, we examine the types of connections that can be expected between the four elements of the governance structure. We explain how the multi scale aspect of governance is theoretically related to the other elements. Sustainable governance, however, involves more than describing patterns of governance. Often it requires changes of the governance patterns. There is a certain logical relationship between our five elements of governance. However, there is no a priori reason for thinking that the mutual influences

between the elements are restricted to this alone, they can affect other questions. In principle, the idea of mutual adjustments means that all five elements can influence all others in both directions. In the next section we will focus on the multi-level question and how it influences the four others.

3.1.3 Multilevel coordination and multifaceted problems: a hindrance to governance

Multi-level governance (MLG), here, is the term used to characterize the relationship between public actors situated at different administrative levels, which is, in the US literature often referred to as "intergovernmental relationships". It relates not only to its multiple nature but also particularly to the interdependence between levels (Mehta et al, 1999). Multi level governance therefore refers to the explicit or implicit sharing of policy-making authority, responsibility, development and implementation at different administrative and territorial levels, i.e. (i) across different ministries and/or public agencies at central government level (upper horizontally), (ii) between different layers of government at local, regional, provincial/state, national and supranational levels (vertically), and (iii) across different actors at sub national level (lower horizontally) (Agrawal et al, 1999). The focus here will be limited to these types of interactions between public authorities while "multi-level governance" approaches often include also interactions between public and private entities (profit or non profit ones), in particular citizens and businesses. For the development of such a comprehensive approach to the issues of "commons" at the community level seen by Ostrom et al. (2010).

According to Agrawal et al (1999), "*the challenge of governance is to develop mechanisms that can combine two incompatible qualities: authoritative (including the possibility of state intervention) and flexible, self-adjusting and "reflective", with a considerable influence on those governed"*. Further, there is a "more encompassing multilevel view of governance needed" for one reason because "problems (like sustainability issues) are multifaceted."

Furthermore, these images of governance focus on coordination processes, in the strictest sense, and tend to ignore the question of how governance challenges the traditional state institutions. Bied-Charreton (2006), takes a more state-centric view on governance. His notion of governance is similar to that of Bakker (2007), and Baron (2003, 2005) in so far as they

argue that contemporary governance serves to bridge the public–private border in the pursuit of collective interests. However, they all agree that governance should be an alternative to government in the definition and pursuit of collective goals. For them, the state remains the most powerful actor in society, hence the key question is what is the role of government in these emerging forms of governance. In this context, there is need for dynamic multi-stakeholder interactions, within spaces of dialogue, based on networks as well as the sharing of knowledge and experience. It is in this context that negotiation from local to global (multiple levels), around the definition of collective projects and general interest becomes inevitable. This requires a state (central and decentralized) acting as a regulator of general interest by establishing a common ground and mutual responsibility for actors within the national context (Huitema and Bressers, 2006; swyngedouw, 2004). This is all the logic behind the new dynamics of governance.

The legitimacy and effectiveness of power in the context of multilevel governance and participation goes beyond the territorial approach of governance: the search for a given problem, the most appropriate area of regulation and adaptation of the scope of public policy trajectories and needs (Huitema and Bressers, 2006). Territory only serves as the intersection of sub national and national levels. It is the common space where separate interests and power relations at multiple institutional scales (political, economic and social) interact. This is in particular the challenge of producing the territory attached to the political dimension of decentralization (Ribot, 2002; Jaglin, 2005). The importance of defining these features of governance in the present context is that, multi-level governance refers to connected processes of governance incorporating both public, private actors and associations in contextually defined forms of exchange and collaboration. This is what is observed in the present water structure in Cameroon. In other words, there is need integrating the new actors that constitute mostly the communities and the civil society at large. This new framework creates new scales and interactions between the scales which require multilevel coordination (Rhodes, 1999). Without such coordination, there may be disastrous implications for the social problem. In certain circumstances, multilevel or inter-level dynamics can greatly impact governance and act as a hindrance to development (Bied-Charreton, 2006). Baron (2003; 2005) and Bakker (2007) also emphasize the relationship between many facets of the problem and the horizontal and vertical coordination this requires.

Rhodes (1999), open this discussion by showing that the richness of the concept of governance lies in its approach as the set of processes that enable the implementation of economic, social and political regulations truly adapted to the realities of society. This perspective leads to normative and prescriptive standards. It forces the reform of development policies around the consideration of legitimacy and consolidation of power, the role of non-state actors and the local level and its relationship with other levels of governance. In so doing, this is the reality of structures and political dynamics of each society. It is also the observation made by Cousins (1992; 1997), who proposes the notions of legality and legitimacy. Governance is to some extent more about process than institution; hence managing multi-level governance becomes a matter of integrating processes at different institutional levels with each other in ways which promote the interests of the overall system.

However, the institutional dimension of multi-level governance remains critical, partly because institutions define the linkages between different levels. On the one, institutions are themselves multi-level and help coordinate multi-level governance. On the other hand, multi-level governance as all types of governance is embedded in institutional webs which shape and constrain.

Thus, multi-level governance theory argues that although local authorities are embedded in regional and national webs of rules, resources and patterns of coordination, these webs do not prevent them from pursuing their interests within global arenas (Ribot, 2002). Many analysts hold that the notion of 'embeddedness' or integration should not be seen as contradictory to the hierarchical model but rather that lower-level institutions are not constrained by higher-level institutions' decisions and actions. Hierarchy has been widely substituted by partnerships or hybrids, competence, participation, effectiveness and equity in self-regulatory governance at different levels. Consequently, multi-level raises the question of relationship between these institutional levels.

In addition to the multi-level and multi actor question Baron (2003, 2005) adds "the multivariate character of policy action." She refers to Rhodes (1996), who focuses on the governing mechanisms of governance such as grants, contracts, agreements - that do not rest solely on the authority and sanctions of government." Bakker (2007) shares the above view and emphasizes that there is need to restore these concepts at the heart of governance and examine development policies in all consistency that surpass the current framework based on

Western values? State power and society cannot be conceived independently. There is need to redefine public policy at the local level, on principles of pluralism, dialogue and consensus, fostering new relationships between public authorities and society. The Cameroon experience shows that such dynamics are carriers of mutual trust between actors. Participation based on the existence of spaces for debate and possible exchanges between players.

Swyngedouw (2004) shows that governance offers a lens to read state relations, power, society, managerial capacities and policy. This promotes the understanding of reality and complexity, the social and political functioning. The author carried out this analysis with the notion of states and its partners in which the relationship between politics and societies becomes the very principle of democratic governance and rebuilding/reconstruction of the State and society. These are precisely the practices of nation-building, state-building and rebuilding of the state. It calls for political reshaping of the state around legitimacy and specifically political bases. Institutional engineering becomes the vector of political pluralism, embodying social plurality, and not that of a technocratic and instrumental vision of democracy or that corresponding to a cultural overhaul with the risk of creating ethnic and religious fragmentation. Mc Cay et al (1987), reaches similar conclusions about the role of democratic governance and crisis. Sustainability of the output crises, which also involves preventing their recurrence or upstream of their appearance, requires always take into account existing correlations between history, sociology, state fragility and conflict. This must be taken into account and allow for a better contextualization of interventions and responses to crises, especially in the prevailing multilateral framework, which the author also points out the gain.

The debate is well posed by Ostrom (1999), who calls for an abandonment of the dominant prescriptive practices in the field of governance. She shows that "ideal forms" of governance should be democratic governance and democracy provided synonymously. The legitimacy of power is a prerequisite for democratic governance, which cannot therefore be reduced to any purely technocratic conception but must instead be rehabilitated as a permanent dynamic, integrating power relations. It should also be considered as a historical journey which implies nonlinearity and rooting real democracy and legitimacy in the long term. Karren Bakker (2007) shows the integration of human rights in the multi-level water governance questions. It grows to the assertion of a right to development, on the one hand, and tries to "demystify" the idea of cultural differences. She calls for harmonization and universality of rights which

become the real driver of governance. It is through hybridization methods of governance and the rule of law, namely in the coordination of relations between actors and sub ordination of powers, the author proposes to create some sort of "legal monster" intended to encompass global governance. New paths emerge in terms of institutional reforms and the role of parliaments to strengthen fiscal democracy. In other words, problems of interplay characterize the interaction of institutions within one societal level as well as between levels (horizontal and vertical interplay). Problems of levels or scale, finally, address the question of to what extent knowledge about institutions on one particular societal level can be transferred to others (Cousins, 1992; 1997).

However, decentralization of public management gives more power to local authorities and non-state actors. Similarly, it promotes the emergence of a citizenship based on a new social contract, adapted to the socio-political reality of countries. Gibson and others (2000) analyze the spatial dimension of decentralization and involvement in redefining the relationship between the state and local levels. Both tracks are well identified by the author: decentralization as a policy of territorial dynamics of production and as territorial construction, one referring to the role of the state and the other in the formal structure of it. Referring to the particular challenge of urban water governance in the context of globalization, there is a difficult paradox: the integration of cities in the national water governance structure is sometimes incompatible with participatory local democracy. At the intersection of the globalization, decentralization and urbanization phenomena, Sylvy Jaglin (2005) shows that the determinants of local economic governance in Africa, is inevitable to complement national economic governance. Moreover, the axes that allow these two dimensions are mutually reinforcing.

Three scalar dimensions of governance appear to be central to water management. According to Ostrom and Bakker who talk of legitimacy and rights problems of scale relate to fundamental questions of democratic legitimacy. In this light they draw closer collective decision-making, scalar levels and potential conflicts. Kuks (2004) has termed these scale-dependent trade-offs a "*democratic dilemma between citizen participation and system effective-ness*". The existing multitude of vertical and horizontal levels of governance can thus be seen as an attempt to mediate different aspects of legitimacy of different sectors in terms of their input and output. Notably, scholars in the field of commons property have argued in favor of highly polycentric and multi-level systems for effective and legitimate environmental

governance (Ostrom 1999; Baron 2003, 2005, Bakker, 2007). At the same time, research on policy implementation has long pointed to the detrimental effect of hierarchies of decision-making for effective policy implementation. Thus, Stephan Kuks (2004) argues that "*multi-level governance should be seen as an alternative rather as a complement to intergovernmental relations defined in a regulatory framework".*

In this framework, 'government' is thought of as an institution, while 'governance' is seen as the process, and this is perhaps where the fundamental difference between the two terms lies. Any human society has some form of governance or forms of governance– global, private, corporate, community, local government or hybrids (see details summarized in Box 2 below).

Box 7: The different levels/areas of governance

The different levels/areas of governance
In deciding who should be involved and in what capacity, governance operates in different areas/levels:
• *Global governance:* This deals with issues outside the direct purview of individual governments.
• *Government governance:* This is governance in national space
• *Community governance* - governance is how other actors, such as civil society organizations, play a role in taking decisions on matters of public concern.
The idea of governance makes it easier to have discussions about how communities or other social actors can take action in collaboration with, or perhaps independently of, established government structures to address issues of concern to citizens.
• *Corporate governance:* This comprises the activities of incorporated and non-incorporated organizations that are usually accountable to a board of directors. Some such organizations will be privately owned and operated, e.g. business corporations. Others may be publicly owned, e.g. hospitals, schools, and government corporations. Governance issues here tend to be concerned with the role of the board of directors, its relationship to top management (the CEO or executive director), and accountability to shareholders or stakeholders.

Source: Osinde R.N. (2005)

In the preceding section we have shown that decision-making has to take into consideration the multi-scale issue. The issue of scale poses the problem of the multi-faceted nature of actors' interests. In this section we have analyzed the multi level issue which involves the local to global, recalling that governance, while being deeply rooted in the territories, should result in a permanent convergence between them. The affirmation of democratic governance is in line with the territorial dimension of governance. Global governance, regional integration, governance and local area(s) of governance are indeed necessary as strategic dimensions of governance. In the next section, we will be looking at the institutional theories with focus on how to coordinate the diversity of actors and spaces.

3.2 The Challenge of water governance, institutional change and water governance models

In the literature of natural resource management, institutions are considered key adaptation of sustainable livelihoods and natural resource management where institutions are understood and considered essential for effective policies. These analyzes tends to borrow the common property resources (CPR) theory approaches related to the new institutional economics (NIS) (Ostrom, 1990; Mehta et al, 1999). New institutional economics became very famous for the approach of transaction costs and the approach of collective action, yet both views design institutions in different ways, despite sharing the same basic principles. Rich analytical branch of institutional economics, property paradigm of man, analyzes the evolution and changes in property rights in society process of reducing transaction costs in the development of new economic opportunities (Ostrom et al, 1993; 2002). They are generally designed as "rules of the game" which provides constraint on the action (Ostrom, 1990). In the meantime, North (1990) sees institutions as formal rules and conventions, including informal codes of conduct or standards that emerge to regulate human behavior and interaction. Analysts common property such as Ostrom (1990) watch collective dilemmas of action and focusing on how the institutions or rules can be purposely designed to produce collective action.

We proceed first to the identification and analysis of institutional factors characterizing the context of the governance of water in Cameroon. The primary objective of this phase of the research is to stimulate discussion on the social and political dynamics, after identifying evolutionary patterns (chapter 1). We base our thinking according to what several authors call a new paradigm of governance with the integration of new actors.

The formulation of a new paradigm of governance based on the general idea that the coordination of the actions of members of a society is a function of the State, the market and civil society (Agrawal and Gibson, 2001, 2003; 2007; Kuks, 2004). This new paradigm stems from the recognition that the search for ways to coordinate individual actions in a context where resources, power and information is distributed in society and no single actor can fill the role of manager. It is well - descriptive in its multiparty governance. In this light we realize there is need to organize these complex questions as will be analyzed in the next section.

3.2.1. Coordination and Institutional Mechanisms

Institutions can be found in two main types: formal and informal institutions. The former is accepted and recognized by law and are documented, whilst the latter is comprised by the behaviour and conventions. North (1993) described institutions with more precision as: "*the humanly devised constraints that structure human interaction. They are made up of formal constraints (e.g. rules, laws, constitutions), informal constraints (e.g., norms of behaviour, conventions, self imposed codes of conduct), and their enforcement characteristics. Together they define the incentive structure of societies and specifically economies"*. The term institutional framework including all the institutions in which decisions are made and implemented. It is composed by: "*(i) institutional environment (constraints guiding individual and organizational behaviour; (ii) institutional arrangements otherwise known as governance models (structure set of linked or interdependent institutions of the social system of the economic, social and political domains); and (iii) organizational actors (individuals, agencies, and organizations)"* (Kuks, 2004). In cases where the institutional framework fails to provide the enabling environment for improvement, there is a need for *institutional change* which depends on the awareness and the need to make choices on the different elements of governance.

Institutional change is seen as a long and complicated process that depends on the period of change, which mostly occurs by accumulation of short term opportunities and generating a gradual rather than instant change leading to a long-term path of change (Kuks, 2004). The series of globalization reforms focus on changing and creating institutions where there is the devolution of state responsibilities to other actors. This trend is based on general liberalization of economies and disengagement of the state. In a bid to implement institutional reforms in the liberalized context in the Cameroonian water sector reforms have been to organize the water sector, mechanisms to assign water resources, and management of public intervention though with little positive results. The interactions with the market need to be developed in the process. In this thesis work different institutional changes are described in Part III. The management of public partnerships and its consequences is analysed with the change in actors' roles and behaviour in the relationship.

According to Kooiman (2003) there are many differences with the concept of institutional change. He clearly differentiates between theory (governance) and practice (governing), and defines governing as: *"the totality of interactions, in which public as well as private actors participate, aimed at solving societal problems or creating societal opportunities; attending*

to the institutions as contexts for these governing interactions; and establishing a normative foundation for all those activities" (Kooiman 2003:4). Within the context of this work the above definition best suits our view, and it will be used analogously with governance.

In developed countries, the concept of governance has to do with the devolution of responsibilities and networking to coordinate processes as seen by Rhodes (2000).

"*governance narrative" provides an account of how a hierarchical government can give way to differentiated polity characterized by network-based processes of coordination*" (known to other scholars as "hybrids"). Her definition best suits the governance structure in Cameroon which portrays a combination of two or more actors as we will be illustrating (part III). Unlike developed countries, governance in developing countries integrates many centres of authority and control in which the actions (of existing user and community organizations), different institutional layers, and stakeholder initiatives are complementary to each other. In this light, institutional reforms towards privatization, liberalization and decentralization in water management for example, in most cases takes a polycentric governance pattern. These new changes in institutional water management approaches, come about with changing roles and responsibilities for state organizations, with much emphasizes on coordination, regulating and enforcing. This new models demand the putting in place of coherent and robust regulatory and legal framework at the national level, which enables and stimulates polycentric governance. This act of integrating new actors is termed as "new governance".

According to Chevallier (2003), the issue of governance applied to the new state involves two alterations of the traditional public administration. On the one hand, the State is not the only master on board. He is forced to take into account the existence of other actors who are required to participate in one way or another, formally or informally, in decision-making (Chevallier 2003). On the other hand, the opening of collective action promotes the search for consensual solutions. If he accepts the inclusion of other actors in the decision-making process, the state waives its "authority", embarks on sharing and builds on the culture of compromise and negotiations. This paves the way for new actors like communities and civil society.

The new paradigm of governance is not without consequences for civil society. It refers to a different positioning of civil society and communities vis- à-vis the public. Indeed, in the case of natural resources, the state is predominant. The new governance invites civil society and communities to be considered as partner organizations of collective action. Whether in a more

effective implementation of existing public standards or the development of new rules, civil society should participate - theoretically - plays a more active role in the development process, decision-making and implementation. Communities should now be able to use the logic of action available to them (mobilization, lobbying, action, cooperation) simultaneously and strategically. This view is based on the fact that communities have set of rules and sanctions mutually understood and applied to those who deviate from operational norms and the principles governing water use; some of these sanctions may not be available in formal institutions.

Our view favours this approach. We find indeed a system of actors, more or less defined in which governance tend to reconcile with as much as possible to the achieve individual and collective goals. The state as a regulator therefore focuses on understanding how the players develop, deal with issues that are relevant to them, strategic behaviors to achieve their objectives (Saleth and Dinah, 2004, Hudson, 1979, Fainstein and Fainstein, 1996). It goes beyond the formal framework to dictate the behavior of social actors and recognize from the experience of the past the way in which concrete actions can be structured. Integrating new actors like communities means incooperating diversity. As pointed out by Kohler-Koch and al, (2001), the concept of community is problematic. Most communities have sets of mutually understood sanctions applied to those who deviate from operational norms and the principles governing water use; some of these sanctions may not be available in formal institutions. As pointed out by Kohler-Koch and al, (2001), the concept of community itself is problematic. As we will be analyzing in the next chapter communities portray much asymmetry and calls for coordination. It is not clear how community-driven pro-poor governance will be steered without the same biases that exist at national levels? How does the participation at this level ensure that the same bias in access and the neglect of sustainability does not take place? How do the communities ensure that they are not just granted participation without control? There is still a need to find an institutional mix that better combines community, market, and state action, as in forms of co-production, co-management, or regulated autonomy. As we will be analyzing in the next chapter communities portray much asymmetry and call for coordination.

One of the mechanisms to governance is the partnership option, in which not only the private and community are involved, but also the government. The relationship among organizations (formal and informal) and partners as well as the institutional framework (formal and informal) are developed in Part III, with a broader perspective including case studies from

Cameroon. In order to develop effective partnerships, there in need to define roles of the different actors.

Institutions of all kinds can be involved in the water governance for large cross-border and international entities to local or regional governments, institutions of much smaller or civil society based organizations and communities. Nevertheless, they have to be dynamic by reforming institutions for better governance. Management bodies of water today undergo institutional and structural changes that reflect national aspirations for a better efficiency and improved performance. At the same time, however, many organizations whose primary function is not the water management are responsible for areas that can have a huge impact on water resources - agriculture, industry, trade and energy are examples.

The notion of regulation is used to understand laws that exist and how they are implemented. It also englobes the role of the public authority in relation to other actors and to questions of accountability and compliance (Mehta et al, 1999; Cleaver, 2001); interaction of legal-administrative systems with political institutions and processes (Nemarundwe, 2003). In this light we can note that responsibilities, roles and functions of the water governance framework vary (Cousins, 1997). They may include but are not limited to the following: Policy formulation; regulation, networking and exchange of information; monitoring and enforcement. Additional actors like non-governmental organizations (NGOs), Civil Society Institutions and community based organizations (Community-Based Organizations, CBO) can play an important role in defining and applying water governance policies (Kooiman 1999).

However, it is unclear how community-driven (pro-poor) governance can be coordinated without partiality at national levels? How the double aim of encouraging participation and water accessibility be achieved without neglecting sustainability? How can communities' participation be accompanied with power and control? There is still a need to find institutional arrangements that better combine community, market, and state action, as in forms of co-production, co-management, or regulated autonomy. In this light, many concepts are being proposed to expand the boundaries for the notion of regulation and interplay between actors. In the next section we will be focusing on the different partnerships or governance models.

3.2.2 Internal coherence of the governance structure

In the previous section, we developed the different elements (multi faceted, multi scalar etc) of governance and the need for interplay while also emphasizing on the need to organize and coordinate. Perceptions towards coordination have evolved. In particular, we see it less faulty but rather constructive to reduce forms of discrimination. But it remains, first, that partnerships for example are always apt institutional arrangements, and secondly, by nature, they are preferred and therefore exclusive. With reference to the case of Cameroon the common governance patterns are hybrid arrangements that, perhaps, for those who contract them portray more advantages than disadvantages, but the stability of a governance system, pose a challenge. The problem indeed is that what distinguishes multilevel, regionalism is not the number of players, but rather the fact that it should meet three basic principles, namely indivisibility, universality and diffuse reciprocity, which are all hard to build.

Admittedly, like multilevel governance, coordination or planning deal with the multifaceted nature of problems. It thus carries within itself its own limits, including some specific aspects in terms of law and engagement of the actors involved. Fainstein and Fainstein (1996: 265) define planning which to us is very close to coordination, as "future-oriented, public decision making directed toward attaining specific goals." Similarly, Hudson (2007: 387) defines it as "foresight in formulating and implementing programs and policies." This future orientation and explicit connection to public decision making and formulation and implementation of policy make clear the connections between governance, coordination and planning. Like governance, planning is a challenging field of theory and inquiry to frame, due to its broad conceptual base that borrows from numerous social sciences. Indeed, in the introductory chapter of their reader on planning theory, Campbell and Fainstein (1996) note that "Planning is an elusive subject of study" and that "…the subject is slippery, and explanations are often frustratingly tautological or disappointingly pedestrian." Planning or coordination is defined by its emphasis on process, and on personal and organizational development, rather than the more narrow focus of incremental and synoptic approaches on achieving specific objectives.

Constructed according to the principles and very different institutions, it may not be possible for convergence between different actors, as we have said above. Otherwise through different well defined stages and agreements, it is this ambition that it is necessary to go in all directions at once, from one negotiation to another, with the objective to build the institutions,

but with partnerships embedded in a liberal order bringing together different values, objectives and reflecting the interests of actors.

Planning or coordination is defined by its emphasis on process, and on personal and organizational development, rather than the more narrow focus of incremental and synoptic approaches on achieving specific objectives. It is more experiential, using "concrete experience and direct participation as the point of departure for problem solving…" rather than relying solely on expert input and data and centralized authority (Hudson, 1979: 392). Effective coordination could be a response to power inequities in more traditional modes of planning. It can aim at defending 'weak' interests and marginalized causes, such as environmental protection and anti-poverty, against the established power of business and government. While successful in blocking particular projects and challenging traditional power dynamics, planning has been criticized for an inability to put forward and mobilize support for constructive alternatives (Hudson, 1979). The democratic approach questions what is seen as the elitism of traditional planning, calling for greater participation by broader society in formulating both goals and solutions.

Finally equity planning overlaps with democratic planning, but is less focused on process and more concerned with outcomes, with most attention directed at addressing who gets what and a defining goal being increasing equality. Most scholars note that no single model or approach is perfect, and that the practice of planning often includes choosing among or integrating across models to suit particular circumstances. Planning theory is also likely best viewed as evolving, with a number of strands that intertwine and unravel with application and experience. One of the most defining elements in the evolution of planning theory is the move from an early spatial and physical focus – primarily on urban form – to an orientation more on the processes, quality and dynamics of decision making and on the social, political, economic and ecological context

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across models to suit particular circumstances. Planning theory is also likely best viewed as evolving, with a number of strands that intertwine and unravel with application and experience. One of the most defining elements in the evolution of planning theory is the move from an early spatial and physical focus – primarily on urban form – to an orientation more on the processes, quality and dynamics of decision making and on the social, political, economic and ecological context within which decision making occurs. Communication, interaction, and relationship-building among government, interest groups and other major sectors are at the heart of collaborative planning; these factors are viewed as means for improving policy development and implementation through social learning and consensus building (Platteau 2003).

In combing ideas from systems thinking with collaborative planning, there is need for development of institutions with the capacity to recognize uncertainty, to manage crises and to deal with complex problems inherent in small town communities. It is argued that more traditional, mechanistic modes of planning and governance systems are poorly matched to the reality. What is needed is "*a systems view of collaborative planning and governance that leads to policy making that is adaptive, innovative and intelligent*" (Campbell and Fainstein 1996)

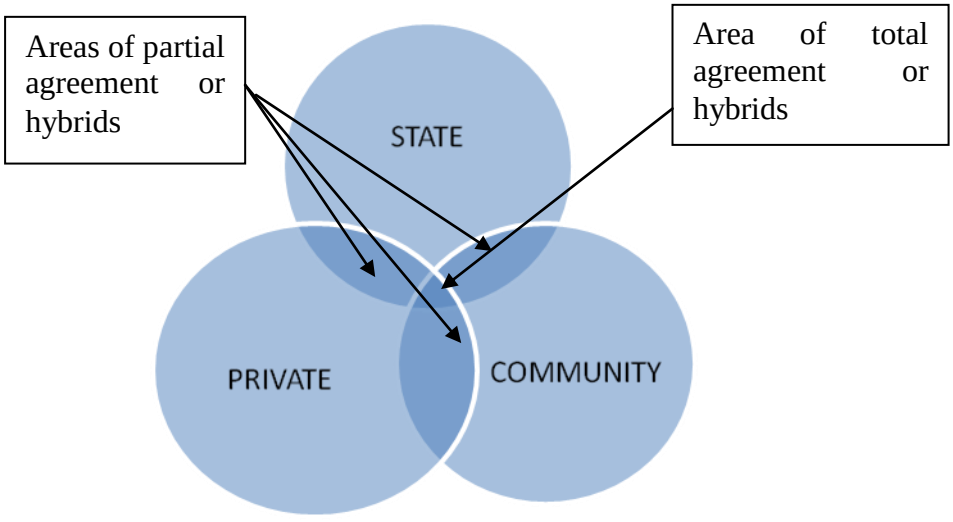
In the above section, we explain how the multi scale aspect of governance is theoretically related to the other four elements of governance. Sustainable governance, however, involves more than describing patterns of governance. Often it requires changes of the governance patterns. There is a certain logical relationship between our five elements of governance. It is easy to see why each previous element imposes harder or softer limitations on aspects of the following element. However, there is no a priori reason for thinking that the mutual influences between the elements are restricted to this alone. In principle, the idea of mutual adjustments means that all five elements can influence all others in both directions. Given the discussion above, coordination is most relevant to this thesis as a collaborative planning tool. The focus on communication and debate through participatory processes that are inclusive and aim to foster shared understanding and shared learning are consistent with the conception of water governance discussed in the next section. In the next section we will be viewing changing governance patterns as applied to water.

3.2.3 Water Governance and changing modes of governance: Hybrids and partnerships

Away from the multi level problem, new governance arrangements (models) are emerging, ranging from decentralization to provinces, regions and municipalities to the transfer of tasks and responsibilities to civil society organizations, water user associations, and river basin agencies. These new institutional arrangements imply changing roles and responsibilities for state organizations, such as coordinating and enforcing. It also requires the development of a coherent and robust regulatory and legal framework at the national level, which enables and stimulates polycentric governance. A governance model refers to these principles of governance, and of the allocation of responsibilities and relationships between stakeholders for tasks and practices required for effective governance (Roger and al, 2010). Existing forms of governance can be grouped into the following non-exhaustive categories based on the various forms and roles and based on the environmental, economic, political, and administrative levels of governance.

Following the definitions proposed above a representation of the notion of new governance which englobes a good number of situations is illustrated below.

Figure 16: Actors in the new governance



Source: Gunningham (2009) and adapted by Ngefor G.S. (2013)

From the schematic elaboration above a definition of the notion of governance is developed as the result of a compromise between actors and public, private and community regulation

instruments. Niel Ginningham (2009) in broad terms proposes three modes of governance available in addressing social and environmental problems: hierarchies, markets and collaboration (although other classifications are plausible). However, some authors treat hierarchy and the state as synonymous, and at times there exist blurring of their roles in the governance and regulatory literatures and for good reason this study will treat state and hierarchy as intimately connected. Bakker (2007) on her part talks of governance models where she proposes the planning, market and community models. These different forms of coordination are ideal typical constructions that are not necessarily to be found in their pure forms in the real world, their central characteristics are readily identifiable (Neil Gunningham, 2009). In some forms of governance, government and governance hold a level of co-existence, with government being just but one level of the diverse governance practices existing in human society and highlighted subsequently.

In recent years, collaboration or the "community model" (network governance) has been widely referred to as the "new governance" and as regards natural resource issues "collaborative governance". This new vision involves a number of characteristics: participatory dialogue and deliberation devolved decision-making, dynamic adjustments, adaptive management, accountability, laws and implementation. This form of governance recognizes that complex political, economic and social systems cannot be readily governed by a single actor. This new atmosphere fails to provide for non-state actors (NGOs) to assume administrative, regulatory, managerial and mediating functions previously undertaken by the state as is the case in Cameroon.

Worthy of noting is that there are important differences between the hierarchy, market and collaborative models. Consumers are represented differently in each model. Accountability and the goals are varied and will lead to distinct policy and management outcomes and thus different weights are given to different stakeholders (Bakker, 2007, 2009). The diversities of the different models necessitate a careful transition from one governance model to another or a combination of two or more (hybrid governance, co-management). This is particularly important when adopting a hybrid model as problems are likely to arise when the aspects of a governance model are incoherent as the goals, accountability structure and role of consumers are likely to change as we will be illustrating with the cases of the Cameroon Western Highlands.

The hybrid perspective, attempts to achieve both accountability and sustainability of water management, it tries to ensure that everyone has the right to water, especially drinking water, and argues in favour of increasing the role of private investment in water development to meet the need for water in growing economies. However, the hybrid perspective faces some challenging questions around issues such as price setting and the state's responsibility to ensure minimum water rights and maximum allowable water use which is contrary to private interests who encourage the user-pay principle. To understand the new models there is need for a more detailed analysis of the different views guiding the models and the constraints that go along with their application. To better analyze the links that exist between these models we adopted the institutional theory as a guide. This theoretical background will help us understand the governance patterns, interactions and hybrids as observed and analyzed in chapters 5, 6 and 7 of this work.

The *new governance* as developed above has both economic and political dimensions and also include the devolution of responsibilities from higher to lower levels of government, reducing the size of governments, avoiding or reducing some of the traditional norms and/or activities. It also involves the privatization of water production and delivery, effective planning, regulation and enforcement (McCarthy, 2003). New governance arrangements aim at integrating new actors, stands for effective collective action to address growing liberalization challenges, and increasing human pressure on the environment. In this light, hybrid governance aims at clarifying and integrating the roles of multiple actors, including the private sector, government authorities, and nongovernmental organizations across territorial scales (McCarthy, 2003). As Bakker (2007) notes, sustainable governance patterns require coherent interrelated institutional (hybrids) structures and processes of planning, markets, administration, tradition and choice at every territorial scale. While the hybrid governance model seems to be an alternative in meeting the challenges in water governance, in Cameroon it is still to prove its effectiveness. In the next section we will be interested in understanding how co-management forms can interact.

3.2.4 Hybrids, Partnerships, water governance Vs real practices

Over the past decade, a significant focus has emerged in the academic literature on governance and fresh water – or "water governance." In the 90s, many countries have initiated a series of reforms of their urban water, often with the support of international financial institutions. However, experience of the last decade reveals that changes in the water sector can be difficult: friction between partners and stake-holder priorities and means, the lack of clarity on the roles and the responsibilities or yet the major concerns concerning the participation of private sector themselves.

Bakker (2003) defines water governance as "*the range of political, organizational and administrative processes through which communities articulate their interest, their input is absorbed, decisions are made and implemented, and decision makers are held accountable in the development and management of water resources*." Similarly Roger and Hall (2003) define it as "*the ways in which decisions that affect water are made, who is involved in making those decisions, and how power is distributed in society*." Bakker (2007) distinguishes water governance from water management, while acknowledging that they are closely linked: "*water governance* refers to the decision-making processes we follow, how we make decisions and who decides; *water management* refers to operational approaches we adopt, and the models, principles and information we use to make decisions." As applied in this thesis, "*water governance, includes the processes, structures and actors – and the dynamic interactions among them – that facilitate and influence decisions affecting water resources and aquatic ecosystems" (*Roger and Hall, 2003). This future orientation and explicit connection to public decision making, formulation and implementation of policy make clear the connections between governance, coordination and planning.

Institutional fragmentation and coordination in Cameroon remain the key water governance challenge. As analyzed in the above sections the issues and the solutions relate much more to social and institutional factors than to lack of basic scientific understanding or adequate technology. At the same time, fragmented governance as in the Cameroon water sector– with myriad actors like the State, agencies within governments and among public, private and civil society interests often impede effective management (Perret et al, 2006; Hugon, 2005; Bakker et al., 2008). Reforms have a strong focus on the private sector. For States not having the means to cover the financial losses of their public companies or to invest in the renovation

and expansion of infrastructure, public-private partnerships (PPP) appear to be an interesting solution for water services.

Consistent with the discussion presented above, Roger and Hall (2003) note that such decisions are and should be political, and should not be left to experts and narrowly framed models. There were high hopes on private operators who, through their expertise and financial resources, would provide better quality services to a larger number of users. Since 1990, governments and local authorities in developing countries are progressively signing PPP contracts in the sector, and estimated water supply PPP. Public- private partnerships for urban water distribution have been controversial, especially in recent years after the termination of several contracts that caused quite a stir and led to questioning the merits of this approach in developing countries development. Many publications have presented diverse perspectives, ambiguous and even contradictory conclusions. Several factors have generated these differences, including a) differences in methodology (the detailed case studies alongside eg cross-country econometric analysis), b) differences in the availability and reliability of data, and c) differences in assessment frameworks (such as regulation or fixing prices , targeting of poor clients, or connection costs - while others incorporate more variables but only cover a period of one or two years).

For some observers, such contracts (Tupepera, 2007) can only give rise to conflicts, given the monopolistic nature of these services. Others are more pragmatic but wonder if partnerships can work well in heterogeneous environments in developing countries, given the problems of institutional capacity, governance, rule of law and enforcement of contracts. Other analysts recall some spectacular failures, with proves that Public Private Partnerships are not adapted to the water sector, and the situation of developing countries in particular. Others attribute these failures to vested interests and political manipulations, by showing that effectiveness depends on successful modeling.

Initially, partnerships involve public-private provision of infrastructure or services that are traditionally provided by the government. There are actually several models of partnerships. The PPP covers a variety of set-ups where one or more tasks is devolved to the non-state partners, which includes the design, financing, construction , renovation or exploitation of a work or service (Gunton and Day, 2003). Depending on the degree of responsibility of the partner in operations management and maintenance, management of risk and new investment,

there are service contracts, management, leasing and concessions. Meanwhile, the model implies a kind of institutional cooperation between the public sector and the private sector within a distinct entity jointly owned by public and private partners. The joint entity thus has the task of ensuring the delivery of an item or service for the benefit of the public. For a donor, the PPP is an opportunity to support actors (associations and private sector) traditionally not supported. In many developing countries the notion of governance as a "partnership" is meaningless, as citizens have no capacity to exercise democratic control over public or private actors in charge of water management, and is often defenseless in the face of water-related risks and hazards. Governance, in other words, is the shaping and sustaining of the arrangements of authority and power within which actors make decisions and frame policies that are binding on individual and collective actors within different territorial bounds (Hanf; Jansen, 1998). These arrangements as we have mentioned above hardly exist in their pure forms. In view of these new actors and the governance sceneries they produce some authors talk of "governance patterns".

The nature of water issues in this generation and the development of approaches to water present a rupture in relation to traditional approaches which were based on centralized public agencies (Hanf; Jansen, 1998). New governance encourages the involvement of government and non - government actors which aim at developing a common understanding of issues and actions to take. This approach leads to two major trends in the context of changing patterns of governance: 1) the integration of knowledge of social and political institutions, including the creation of adaptive management models and 2) the devolution of authority and responsibility to local government scales and non-governmental organizations (Niel Gunningham, 2008). There are many examples of this type of collaborative approaches or hybrids, especially in a context where many efforts are made to significantly improve the participation of civil society in the management of water (Huitema and Bressers, 2006).

Numerous studies have analyzed these arrangements, demonstrating the importance of going beyond the advanced rhetoric. Many of these studies are part of an exploratory mode and focus on specific experiences of water governance models (Bougerra et al, 2010, Leach et al 1997a; 1997b). Presently, attention is being focused on the involvement of civil society and the latter's ability to resolve conflicts (McCarthy, 2005). However, a careful reading of the impressive literature on the analysis of participatory approaches requires the recognition of the plurality of experiences and the difficulty of wanting to replicate good practices from one

context to another (Long and Long, 1992). The tendency to identify best management practices was quickly confronted with the difficulty of reproducing. Nevertheless, some observations can enrich any theoretical reflections on the subject.
First, we observe various types of membership organizations responsible for the implementation of water governance. McCarthy, (2005) identifies three types based on the civil society, government agencies (agency- based) and a hybrid of the two. The first category of the typology - leaves room for different types of representation of the idea of civil society and is our point of interest.

Second, the planning effort is the central point of a vast majority of water governance arrangements and is an important success factor (Bromley, 1992; Cleaver, 2000, 2001). Despite the variability of the participatory approaches (Leach et al., 1999), the ability to complete a joint action depends on the dynamics accompanying the planning activity, rather than the implementation of specific actions.

Thirdly, the development of collaborative approaches is done regularly in the absence of a devoted responsible organization's authority (Sharma, 2000; Sharma and Nayak, 2013). Collaborative approaches are rarely related to decision-making processes leading to the establishment of regulatory mechanisms (McCay et al, 1987). The collaboration action should be based on the political will in place and the willingness of local communities.

Fourthly, the funding of schemes accompanying collaborative approaches must be considered with great care. Meanwhile the funding of organizations responsible for water management should be considered in relation to their ability to act. However, the funding of schemes can lead to other consequences, such as competitiveness between organizations, blurry accountability mechanisms, perception of the role of public and parastatal agencies, the role and importance of private grants, etc.

There is no universal blue-print for creating a effective partnership for each one will certainly be created with a particular purpose in mind. Though the Public-Private Community partnership approach seems to be promising, they do not occur naturally. A three way collaboration (known to some authors as hybrids, partnerships or contracts) is not easy to come about and putting together partners from three (the governmental sphere, the private sector and civil society) very different sectors to work together in a fragile and complex sector

as that of water. Synergy (contracts) as teamed by Tupepera (2007) is a distinguishing feature of collaboration that gives partnerships an advantage over single actors.
There are certain conditions that have to be met before any collaboration can be considered as a true partnership (Gunton and Day, 2003). These conditions will determine whether or not the three sectors can create and sustain a working and mutually beneficial partnership.

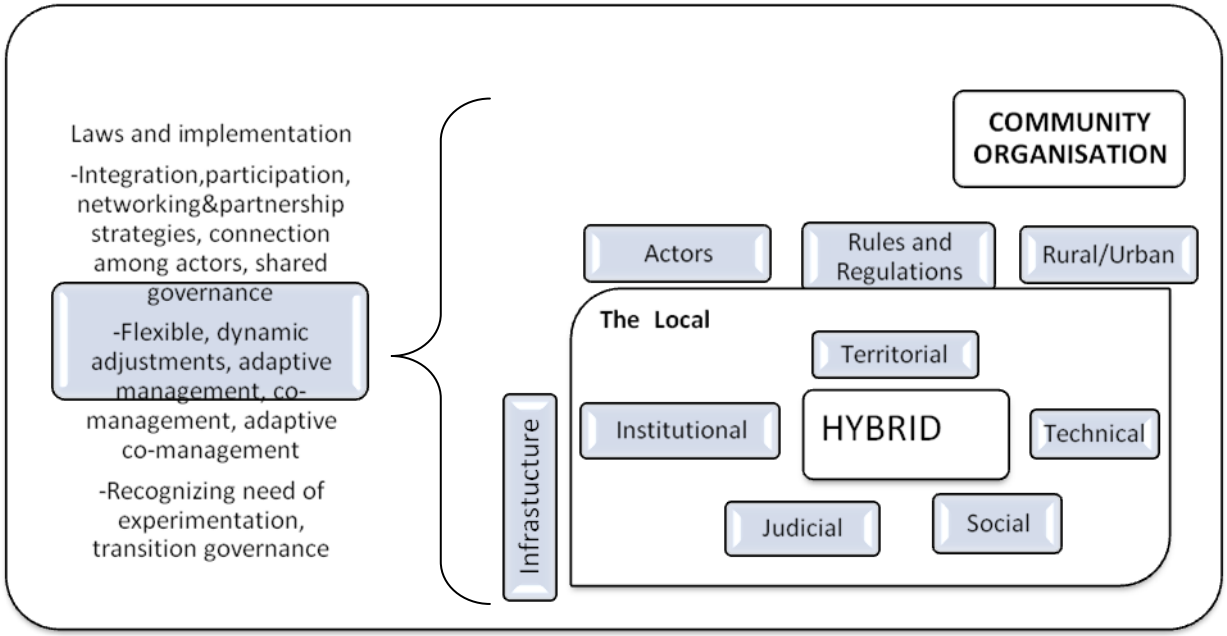
Closely related to the previous point, theories on governance is abundant but often presents an idealized vision of the interrelations between the main spheres involved: the state, the market, and "civil society". This idealized version of governance presents the state, the market and "civil society" as partners participating in symmetric, triangular interaction, as in the notions of "public-private partnership" and "tri-partite partnership", which have become central in mainstream public policy (UNDP, 2006). Some key concepts in the notion of governance, such as "civil society", have diverse, even contradictory meanings for different intellectuals and policy-makers (see, for instance, Baron, 2005; Bouguerra et al, 2010). We argue that there is a need to critically examine these idealized understandings of governance that abound in the policy literature.

In sum, the major obstacles faced in water governance are more socio-political in nature than geographic and scientific (Bakker, 2007). Issues of representation of interests, the legitimacy of the participants and the process, fairness of decisions and the implementation of actions translate into varied experiences that are often at the center of the difficulties of implementing collaborative approaches (Baron, 2003, 2005). These authors insist that diversities exists in societies at different scales (which involve territorial and social boundaries) involving multi governance and rendering the application of homogenous laws difficult. Understanding these experiences must therefore go beyond structural elements and understand the specific social and political dynamics in each model chosen. Theoretical approaches used must be able to reflect the variety of possible cases by focusing on the actual functioning of collaborative organizations, their integration into other mechanisms of water governance, and also consider possible generalization of some analysis to contribute to the improvement of the models.

The hybrid model seems to be the emerging solution. The term hybrid here goes beyond the institutional scale (Public Private Participation, PPP) to incorporate the local extremes (rural/urban, social classes, laws) that can be identified in a given region (see fig 17). The concerns of the current governance arrangements as they apply in the Western Highland

region of Cameroon will be addressed in terms of what Huitema and Bressers call the "governance pattern"(elements of governance). Thus the governance pattern of a particular region can be understood as a combination of the characteristics of five elements identified by asking the questions: where? (level and scale); How? (with what instruments); With what? (resources); Who? (actors); and By what Approach? (principles and strategic planning)(Niel Ginningham, 2008).

Figure 17: Hybrid governance in community water projects



Source: Ngefor G.S, 2014

In the Western Highlands of Cameroon, a complexity of these elements renders the management of local water supplies quite difficult. It is very difficult to apply uniform regulations in rural and urban areas in Cameroon for example, a result of divergences in the social organization, multiple actors and perceptions. For present purposes, the central question is: what governance arrangements are likely to work best in terms of effectiveness, efficiency, equity, and political acceptability? Are markets, hierarchies or collaboration (or some hybrid incorporating aspects of each) likely to produce the best (or at least better) outcomes? These are questions that will be answered through an examination, at the micro-level, of the particular challenges of water management in the Cameroon Western Highlands and the particular governance alliances that might be best suited to address them.

Nevertheless, no matter the governance model adopted, there is need to define individuals rights to access.

Much of the literature on water management reforms is concerned with the creation of private property rights for resources which were formally governed as common pool resources (CPRs). The most important is the impacts of these reforms on drinkable water. As Noel Castree (2003) notes much work on this emphasizes on case specific analyses of different types of processes which can are grouped under the rather nebulous banner of neoliberalisation: marketisation, privatization, deregulation, reregulation, corporatization, commercialization ….Unfortunately these reforms have always met serious difficulties in Africa and Cameroon in particular. Maybe attention should first of all be directed towards identifying the status of water in Cameroon and the rights of the citizens to water access. We will turn next on the issue of how to engage new partners like the civil society in the provision of rural and small town water supply and sanitation at the community level.

3.2.5 The rise of "civil society" and changing governance patterns

In recent times, there has been much theory to substantiate the emergence of many formal and informal institutional arrangements that are involved in governing beyond the state. As defined by Swyngedouw (1999), governance beyond the state (although often with the inclusion of parts of the state) refers in this context to the appearance of institutional or quasi institutional arrangements of governance that are organized in the form of associational networks of private, civil society and state networks. The urban and suburban space is becoming a pivotal milieu where these new arrangements are bringing in transformation or contradictory characteristics. This is seen where civil society organizations are gaining grounds socio-politically and economically and potentially empowering and democratizing.
When we talk of participation or integration of actors in water governance, it's to avoid the operation of these bodies acting outside the state with the dramatic consequences in development. All along we have been using the term civil society without giving a particular meaning to it.

There is much confusion about the concept of civil society. This is related to its status, its "contents" and its position both analytically and empirically. There exist a set of definitions

from the past and contemporary times as to the content and structure while taking into account the challenges and transformations of the society. The heterogeneity and diversity of definitions suggest indeed the difficulties of unanimously defining civil society. Our attention in this concept is not to attempt a definition but rather to interrogate on the "new civil society" within the context of sustainable water governance in Cameroon. With the rise of civil society in Cameroon, state intervention within a particular context needs to integrate a collection of other actors. In line with the concept of "community", civil society has always been regarded as a homogenous forum with shared interests. It is necessary to note that no matter the definition of civil society, it presents challenging notions (which include heterogeneity, conflicting, not necessarily civic nor democratic) which need to be taken into consideration by the state in its adjustment process. Civil societies operate in dynamic contradictory capitalist societies and can be open to dialogue, negotiations (these constitute conflict resolution strategies that can be adopted to reach a compromise) or confrontations and activities parallel to the state.

These two conditions (collaboration or conflict) depend largely on the state's ability to act as a political voice of the community or when the civil society finds representation in the state, in the form of participation, integration and democracy. The civil society can on the other hand be violent when they are convinced that the state does not protect them from surplus capital accumulation by private bodies[43]. This situation is problematic as the gap between civil society and the state widens and renders governance impossible.

In sum, while the state is a pivotal instrument to maintain social cohesion and legitimacy, the boundaries between the state, civil society and the market vary significantly from time to time. In this light, there exist perpetual challenges of the state in constantly restructuring governance. Where this is not done, as already mentioned above, the society reacts from dialogue to violent demonstrations imploring all the powers they dispose of. In this light the question of coordination comes in with the need for common platforms (rules and regulations, norms etc) to guide these different actors.

[43] Being the major reason we needed to explore this concept, in subsequent parts we will use the examples of Bali, Kumbo and Tombel to demonstrate how civil societies can be violent to counteract the government. The most difficult thing is determining if the society's actions are legitimate or not.

3.3 Water governance and systems regime: Fragmentation/Integration problem

According to some, the conceptual basis and practice of water governance, planning and management is in the midst of a paradigm shift (Bouguerra, 2010). This shift involves an evolution from a focus on optimizing resource efficiency and/or maximizing economic gain through top-down, centralized allocation of water resources towards systems oriented governance models and planning processes that view social and ecological systems as linked through regulations and rely on a broader group of actors to participate in decision making (Cleaver, 2001).

Two key themes discussed in the literature regarding this shift are:

1. A broader view of the institutional context for water governance that is much more distributed or polycentric across a multiple scales and includes informal as well as formal institutional arrangements (Ostrom, 2001; Baron, 2003; Bakker, 2010).

2. A mode of planning that strives to be inclusive, collaborative and participatory in nature, and is grounded in discursive decision making (Baron, 2003; Bakker, 2010).

In our problem analysis we put forward that the Cameroon water sector and community water supplies in particular are fragmented. As analyzed in the previous section, governance is not the sole concern of the state, but rather emerges from the interactions of many actors, including the private sector and non-profit-making organizations. Governance extends social coordination and decision making beyond the state to include non-state actors, including resource users, citizens, private-sector interests and non-government organizations in decision making and implementation (Baron, 2005). It can be formally institutionalized or expressed through subtle norms of interaction or even more indirectly by influencing the agendas and shaping the contexts in which actors contest decisions and determine access to resources.

In the context of fresh water, Baron, (2003); and Bakker, (2007) note that decisions about the use and management of water resources should – and, indeed, do – involve actors beyond the state. They further emphasize that, given the complexity associated with interactions among ecological, hydrological and human systems and trends towards smaller governments, the state alone cannot do everything. Some functions are best handled by other actors taking into account the fact that different actors hold different perceptions as to the status of water. It is in this light that we it is necessary to talk of possibilities of coordinating these actors by defining their rights and water status. The regime theory suits better for this analysis.

3.3.1 Jurisdictional Fragmentation, Polycentric legal regimes and water governance

Regime theory is based on the notion that property rights determine the accessibility of water systems as a natural resource for various users and use functions. This section does not only elaborate the elements of a governance structure and a resource regime, but also deals with the institutional dynamics of governance and resource regimes. It will also identify conditions that determine both the stability and the dynamics of governance structures and resource regimes. Authorities, regulations and their application have an extremely important role in creating and implementing rules and regulations. Their functions include the assignment of rights to water use, environmental management related to the use of water, water quality, future use and financial management issues. Regulators are also responsible for pricing and performance standards of service (Economic Regulation). He agrees that the actual function of regulators and enforcement is established in a clear legal framework reflecting water policy. In some cases, the same agency provides for the regulation and enforcement, in others these functions are separated. Regulatory agencies and enforcement usually have a set of implementation tools: fines, taxes , penalties , withdrawal of permits and licenses , etc.

To up our consideration of regimes we believe that regimes affect individual behavior, and collective action when referring to resource management. Institutions such as property rights, social norms, economic incentives and policy instruments have multiple impacts on individual behavior and strategies. According to many authors, before adopting of one or a combination of governance models it is necessary to understand the particular region concerned. It is in this light that Bakker (2007) distinguishes three categories of resource management upon which reforms can be undertaken. "(1) Resource management *institutions* are the laws, policies, rules, norms and customs by which resources are governed; (2) Resource management *organizations* are the collective social entities that govern resource use; (3) And resource management *governance* which is a process by which organizations enact management institutions; in other words, the practice by which we construct and administer the exploitation of resources" (Bakker 2007). See Figures 13 and 14 (Saleth and Dinar, 2004).

As put forward by economists and political scientists the degradation of the environment can be controlled with dynamic institutional arrangements and constant reconstruction. While policy theory concentrates on the effects of resource policies and their corresponding

implementation instruments, property rights theory focuses on rights and their effects on the sustainable management of water resources. I share the view that any of this categories detached from the other will certainly yield negative results. Also an efficient management of water necessitates a widely accepted definition if water is a commodity or a human right. Till date, no explicit right to water is expressed in the most relevant international treaty, although the UN Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights issued a comment in 2002 asserting that every person has a right to "sufficient safe acceptable, physically accessible and affordable water" (ECOSOC 2002, 2010).

Nevertheless it further explained that human right to water does not imply free access, a situation which is at odds with cultural and religious views on water access in Cameroon, especially in rural areas. Indeed, the UN Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights recognized the ambivalent status which a human right conveys upon a resource when it defined water as an economic, social and cultural good as well as a commodity good. This is true for other human rights (food, shelter) but it is at the same time necessary that some sort of public or collective safety measures exist to ensure efficiency.

So far, of the different responses proposed to solve water governance questions none it is fully effective. There are two main approaches- the form of environment policy intervention and policy science options. In every case, the capacity for government intervention in this area is has shown its limits due to implementation deficits. Most policies focus on analyzing state measures (e.g. the design of use and protection policies) and their effects (e.g. on resource sustainability). Meanwhile, policy sciences are interested in the definition, application and effectiveness of the actual programs that are put in place. However, little attention is focused on the linkages public policies (governance) and property rights, particularly how management options redistribute property rights. In this context, some authors like Bakker (2007) emphasize that property and use rights must be clearly defined to facilitate the effective, efficient use and management of resources. In her opinion, it is irrelevant who actually owns these right but rather how he/she uses it. However, there is need that governments define the status of water.

Institutions are considered as sets of rules that guide interactions between individuals by determining their range of actions in certain situations. Consequently institutions are made of of both past actions and the present framework within which new activities take place.

Institutions, and hence regimes, can change over time and become increasingly differentiated (North 1990; 1993). Our theoretical framework to guide our understanding of institutional regime is North's (1990; 1993) definition of a *resource regime as an institutional system with two steering dimensions (property rights and public policies) which in interaction affect the use and management of the resource*. Thus, the main components of our research framework are given by resource regimes, coordination, the possible points of disagreements and their impact on water governance as illustrated by Saleth and Dinah (Figure 18)

Figure 18 : Elements of governance

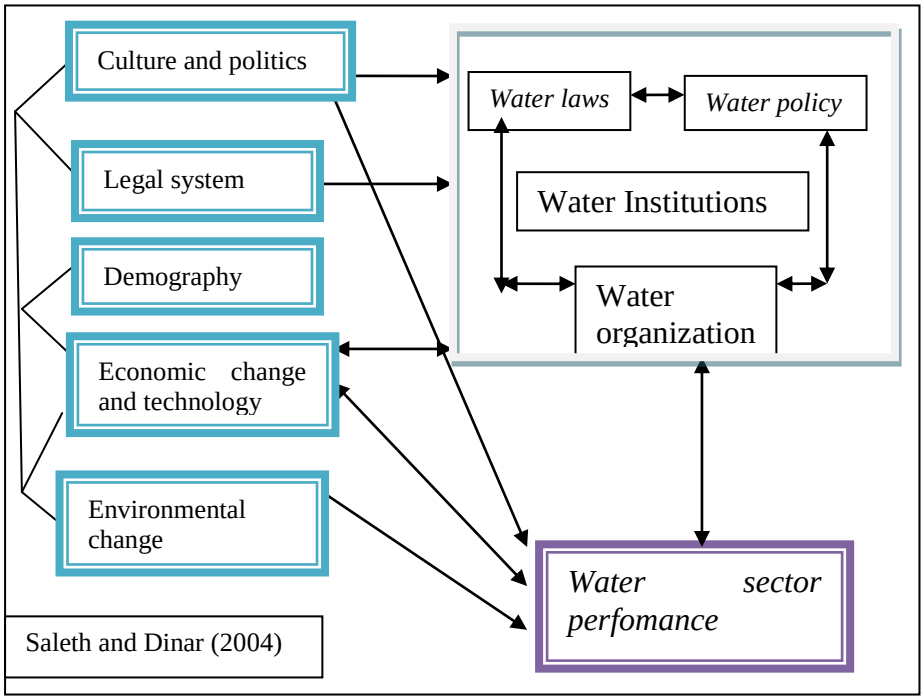
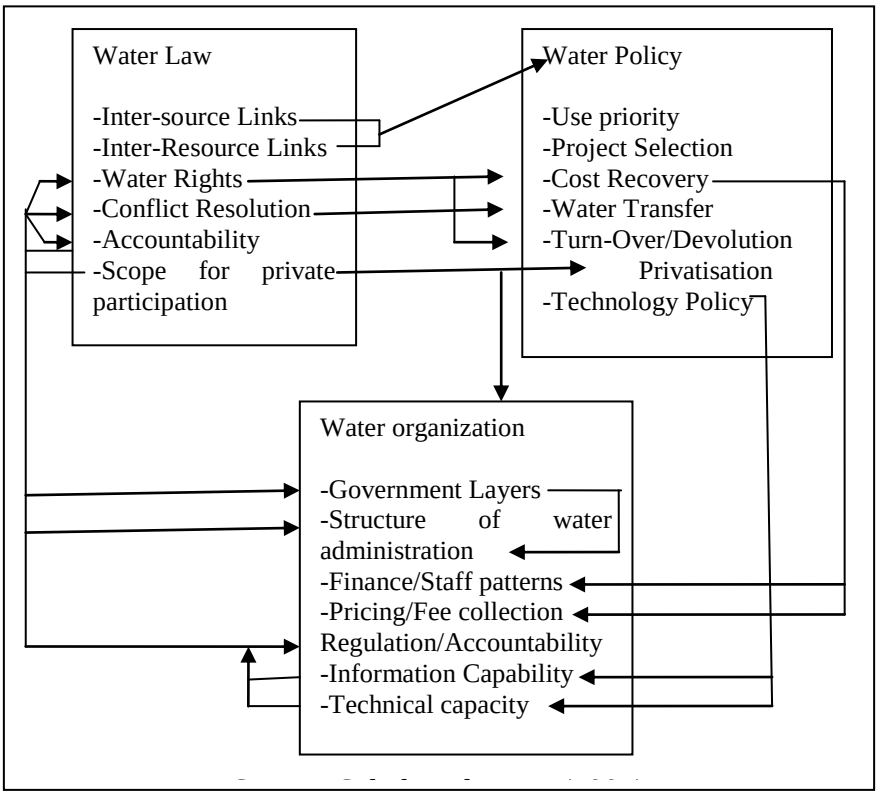


Figure 19 : Coordinating governance structures



Saleth and Dinar (2004)

Defining the status of water is a complicated affair, because drinking water is a non substitutable resource essential for life and water is a natural monopoly subject to environmental externalities. In this case, water pricing should not be the priority and thus an overwhelming justification for public and collaborative governance models. This view is shared by many authors who presume that full privatization of potable water resources should be accompanied by a strong regulatory framework for price controls and quality standards as this model has proved not to be pro-poor. The case of Cameroon is striking because communities have a different perception of water contrary to the state. From this perspective, collective management by communities necessary but not without harmonizing the two views.

There is much literature in favour of collective, community based forms of water management which tend to idealize communities as coherent with homogenous social structures, despite although these societies to be less egalitarian (Mc Carthy 2005). Although research has demonstrated how cooperative management institutions for water (common pool resources,

CPR) can function efficiently to avoid depletion, (Ostrom 1990) other research point to the limitations of some of these collective action approaches in water supply (Cleaver 2000).

Most of the progressive strategies are those that adopt two fold tactics: reforming rather than abolishing state, private or community governance, while also fostering and sharing alternative local models of management.

These models are varied and no single model of governance can be anticipated or imposed (Gibson Graham, 2006). It should be noted here that no matter the actor we are dealing with the state, private or community governance, consumers remain a priority. Each role implies different rights, responsibility and accountability mechanisms (Bakker, 2007).

In fact most governments are choosing hybrid management models or better still co-management. We can also talk of adaptive management patterns. In this light, Bond (2003) supposes that rural or sub urban water projects would have continued to work had there been state resources available for ongoing subsidization. Meanwhile an upfront cash contribution based on the willingness-to pay is required from users to demonstrate demand and develop community capacity to administer funds and tariffs. However this view is quite controversial as at least a 100% cost recovery (full cost recovery) is required for operation and maintenance from communities. As Cameroon's experience suggest there is a real contradiction between cost recovery, the needs of the poor and what they are able or willing to pay.

In line with the problems faced with sub urban and rural water commodification strategies which are portraying devastating impacts in the Western Highlands, are there possibilities of management models reaching the right deal? If yes then water pricing will consequently fit with the new rhetoric of adaptive management and adaptive co management. Reaching that conclusion is quite ideal as there has always existed gaps between governments subsidies and what the people are willing to pay which poses the question of a full cost recovery in this model. We propose that, since it has hardly been possible to reach the best results by using universal strategies, maybe it is better to adopt a view, which goes that each community be treated singly. On the other hand it counters the idea of seeking a collective solution to all water supplies which in turn renders management and policies easier to implement. However we are convinced that the main challenge is not for governments to define the rights of

citizens in relation to water access but rather to implement the laws adopted. In Cameroon these laws do exist in a plural legal system.

3.3.2 Unclear Property Rights and water governance

In the preceding section, we have emphasized on the fact that there is need to define the status of water. In our analysis we put forward that, the real challenge does not depend on creating laws but rather on their implementation. In this section we will be showing that, just like in Cameroon many countries do have laws but rather the jurisdictional framework is fragmented. The fragmentation and lack of coordination of policies among the involved actors, especially at the central state level, in the decision making process remain an important characteristic of the Cameroonian case. However, an undergoing process of co-ordinated efforts should emerge, aiming to reduce such phenomena and facilitate different types of participation and collaboration. The requirements for legal compliance especially with local organizations and communities to enhance sustainability and participation regarding water policies. While the institutional framework should consider the rules formally structuring the organization of the fairly static and plural legal system, they should also consider dynamic elements that impose change. The existing institutional framework, enhanced by new rules issued by the State should be a set of benchmarks around which a new space of team play is structured. The time of initiation of a new collective action is particularly well suitable for the observation of the influence of rules on the behavior of actors and vice versa.

Meanwhile many authors do emphasize the impact of water rights on the use of water resources and they discuss ways in which existing property rights act as a barrier to behavioral change especially in cases where such change is desired by policy makers. Property rights do matter, but they coexist with customary traditions of water use and distribution. The work of Elinor Ostrom is well known in this respect. With her book 'Governing the Commons' she emphasizes the importance of regional and local institutional arrangements which are often based on a long tradition of informal but commonly shared water rights (Ostrom 1990).

In Europe, Barraqué and others (2006) made an analysis of the influence of water rights on the administration in various European countries. They noticed that "*environmentalists seem to have overlooked the importance of a specific analysis of past customary laws governing the commons, from which one could try to derive institutional innovations for our present and*

future commons". He remarks that the local character of "customary institutions makes them less visible to those who primarily focus on legal systems or regulations at State level". Customs with respect to water as a sort of common property were maintained and even developed under the modern liberal State in areas subject to floods or droughts.

In the United States two major legal doctrines have merged to deal with surface waters: the riparian doctrine (water is not owned; the landowner has a 'usufructuary' right only) adopted in the humid Eastern states, and the appropriation doctrine (water rights are acquired by actual use; the first user acquires the best right, the second user the second best, etcetera) which applies in differing forms in the more arid Western states (Mehta, L. and al, 1999). Both doctrines demonstrate how specific hydrological circumstances have set customs which have developed into legal institutions.

In their book on water use principles in the Middle East, Leach and al (1999) remark that water use patterns in the Middle East are not well known because legal systems often operate in "mysterious and approximative manners". Water use principles in the Middle East are often based on old Islamic rules and customs. *"The more arid the zone the more subtle the rules to share water cycles. Nevertheless the art of managing scarcity does not mean that society operates in an egalitarian manner. The scarcer the resource, the larger the demand, and the more emotional the attitude of individuals and governments towards any scheme that appears to change the status quo."* (Saleth and Dinah, 2004) Water is gradually becoming a commodity rather than a freely available and poorly regulated good in the economies of Africa. To re-assign access to water and to guarantee a security of access to water, laws in modern Africa is an extremely complex confluence of customary law, Western based codes and principles, and recent international law (Leach, et al, 1999). This means that the inability to govern depends both on the complexity of the institutional structure as well as on the communities.

As a result, the outcome of governance is uncertain due to the complexity of the systems to be managed and complexities in the environmental and socio-economic milieu influencing the performance of implemented management strategies. One may distinguish different types of uncertainties in local water schemes; uncertainty in system understanding, inherent unpredictability of certain factors and uncertainty in the implementation of the regulatory framework. Adaptive management embeds uncertainty as a fundamental principle in any

management approach adopted. Whether singly or co managed, pro activists of this approach put forward a series of principles which could ensure the success of community water projects; flexibility or dynamic adjustments, a transitional or experimental phase, enforcement of rules and regulations, shared governance (See fig 16) .

Meanwhile an acute problem remain, no matter the model chosen there is always the need at any given level on who to assign what, where and how. In this light, the question of a compromise between all actors is inevitable. It is necessary to come into agreement over the major issues in the management of the local water supplies.
Within the framework of the Western Highlands of Cameroon presenting a multitude of actors, (with their diverse interests) with whom communities sign contracts, maybe one should first of all question but the choice of the co-management partners. In Kumbo and Bali for example we realized that for over 40 and 50 years respectively they have had at least three management models at times with extremes conditions. Some models had two or more partners with two different views on water rights.

In the case of Kumbo from 1973 to 1991 it was under the National Water Corporation (more of the state controlled). Between 1991 to 1992, a period controlled entirely by the community (Nso Cultural and Development Association) and presently, jointly controlled by Kumbo Water Authority and the municipality. Since we have reserved a section to analyze the management models, what we can say at this level is that the continuous search of a model is as a result of the failure of the present. One can forecast that there is still much time to achieve the required model. This also hold true for Bali and Bafou. We could maybe find the reasons of the failure when looking at the literature that has been carried out in this domain.

To conclude, customary rights on water act as an institutional barrier to behavioral change and to a more sustainable resource governance. They preserve existing modes of water management. Debating the redistribution of such customary rights not only affects the sustainability of water resources, but also the equity of access to water resources. As Bakker formulates it: “One of the most controversial issues is the difference between water as a social right and water as a commodity. Water could be both, and could be neither. Water is not a social right in the sense that everyone is entitled to get as much water as they wish to. But water is a social right as long as it is the basis for life. Similarly, water is not a commodity in the sense that everyone is entitled to own it like one owns other commodities. But water is

something precious and finite, therefore tradable and under economic evaluation…" (Bakker, 2007). In this section of this dissertation we raise the social-political issue of access rights. In chapters 5, 6 and 7 we will elaborate on this controversy as it is related to a debate about water rating in community water supplies in Cameroon. However it should be noted that laws do evolve. In other words, there could be many triggers for change, but it depends on the conditions if a trigger, or a combination of triggers, results in change. For a theory on regime change, we need to identify such conditions, which can trigger change or lead to conflicts. In the next section, we have regrouped some of the possible causes of conflicts and the need for negotiations in water governance.

3.4 Conflicts: the result of coordination inability

The concept of governance has witnessed much success in many fields. It tries to explain the complexity of the management of water and sanitation services: because it regroups at the same time the territorial dimension (local/regional), the economic dimension (public/private) and a social dimension (participation of users). The wide range of the concept attempt a complete theory of governance can be summarized and each leading to a major question: (1) the diversity of actors who pose the question of legitimacy of a heterogeneous environment and diversity of scales. (2) The interdependence between the different actors making up the collective action introduces the problem of uncertainty; the role of autonomous organs (at times with diverse interests) in governance poses the problem of collective responsibility. (3) The complexity and blurry responsibilities of actors prompt one to interrogate on the amputation of powers where they seem to be devolved. (4) The new role assigned to the state (as a regulator) poses the question of the sustainability of the governance model adopted.

It will seem less interesting if we barely reproduce these models without critically analyzing these questions or elements of governance that constitute the major sources of conflicts in any one given model. We identified three major difficulties leading to eventual conflicts and exist more or less in each of the models. We will first point them out here in a general manner and later on in chapters 5, 6 and 7 carry out concrete analyses through the cases chosen within the context of this study. This will have to do with how the participative model has been adopted and applied.

Coordinating conflicts between actors and governance levels

It is hard to outline the different causes of conflicts that exist in the domain of water management. Nevertheless we regrouped most of the sources under two main causes: clash of interests and power differences. One of the critical aims of water management is to continually reconcile the opposing interests of all water users - be they individuals, enterprises, corporations, interest groups, administrative or sovereign entities. The management of water-related conflicts, confrontations, competitions and co-operation are thus a part of water governance in its broadest sense, and can range from peaceful co-operation between users of a particular water resource to negotiating disputes between sovereign states.

Clash of Interests of the actors

There is a growing perception that effective water governance requires an open social structure, which enables broader participation by civil society, private enterprises, information networks, and other legal institutions that relate to the access and management of the water resource. Improving water governance is therefore about understanding processes and improving the very complex relationships between many water actors with different priorities with respect to problems which concern the social unit in question. It also has to do with reconciling the competing priorities to ensure that the processes are made more efficient, the overall goal being improved services which include the poor. There now seems to be a widespread agreement that in developing countries the state alone will be unable to meet internationally agreed targets for reducing the number of people with no access to clean water and adequate sanitation.

Governance, in other words, is the shaping and sustaining of the arrangements of authority and power within which actors make decisions and frame policies that are binding on individual and collective actors within different territorial bounds (Hanf; Jasen, 1998).Where these arrangements are not possible to be implemented there exist persistent conflicts.

In this connection, the determination of the ends and values in relation to water management, and the selection of the means to pursue those ends and values do not happen in a social vacuum. Rather than being the result of a balanced partnership, the process of water governance resembles a highly asymmetric and evolving structure where the actors tend to have dissimilar proportions of political power and knowledge. In practice, water policies that have often a significant political content are designed and implemented with disregard for the

values, opinions, and preferences of the citizens and in the absence of democratic governance arrangements. In practice, water governance consists in the interaction between governments, large businesses, political parties, civil and other organizations representing sectoral interests (e.g. workers' unions, religious organizations, peasant movements, etc.), international agencies (e.g. international financial institutions and other agents of the process of "global governance"), NGOs, and other relevant power holders. These actors are involved in continuing debates and in social and political confrontations around how water and essential water services should be governed, by whom, and for whom. These confrontations are at the heart of the process of democratic water governance, which is characterized not only by dialogue and negotiation but also by growing uncertainty and protracted social and political conflicts. To this we turn next to the different types of conflicts that are visible or that are likely to occur, their causes and their impacts.

Water crisis and power control

The highly relevant debate on the potential for international water conflict and cooperation is far from being settled (Swyngedouw, 2004). However, there is a second dimension of water conflicts that continues to receive relatively less attention in water policy literature: intra-national water conflicts. This characterization may be misleading, as in fact in many cases, water conflicts have both an inter- and an intra-national dimension. Nevertheless, the focus here is particularly on social struggles over water that range from confrontations over the control of water bodies and water infrastructure to urban conflicts over the inequalities and inefficiencies in the access to essential water services. On this subject, there is solid historical evidence showing that the control of water and water systems has played a significant role in the emergence of social and political conflicts, and continue to do so. Thus, water control has been a major factor in the establishment and consolidation of asymmetrical power relations often leading to structural conditions of inequality and injustice in the access to water (Swyngedouw, 1999).

It is also likely that the *liberalization of the water supply sector* will lead to greater potential for disputes. In most countries, government agencies are stepping back from service provision and handing-over water schemes to communities and NGOs. The potential for *inequality in service provision* is also high, in terms of the rich having access to water at low cost, unless price regulation and other rules are put in place and enforced. In cases where community or

private control improves equality of access to a water scheme, conflicts may arise between the managers and those who previously benefited most, such as elites.

Among other cases, Cameroon is not an exception. In more recent years, the record of intra-national water conflicts include from peaceful demands to the authorities, judicial litigation, demonstrations, mass parades, and other forms of civic protest including civil disobedience such as non payment of taxes or water bills, to direct confrontations involving in the extreme the destruction of property (e.g. destruction of water infrastructure) and often the loss of human lives. Although these forms of water conflict have become widespread around the world (see, for instance, Shiva, 2002; Barraqué, Vlachos, 2006), they tend to receive less attention in the mainstream water policy literature. However, this is arguably one of the most difficult challenges facing water governance in the twentieth-first century: while it may be possible that the predictions about future international water wars are at times exaggerated, the occurrence of intra-national social struggles as a result of water inequality and injustice is unlikely to diminish in the foreseeable future.

Water conflicts can be based on a number of problems ranging from the links between conflicts over the provision of urban water services (power differences) and the process of capital accumulation (Swyngedouw, 1999, 2004), the multidimensional character of water struggles arising from neoliberal water reform policies (Laurie et al., 2002; Laurie, 2007), to the interrelations between intra-national water conflicts and the long-term development of citizenship (Castro, 2013), just to give a few examples.

Integrating conflict resolution approaches in water governance

There are diverse means of resolving water conflicts and overcoming the different questions at the local and national levels. There could be formally recognized or merely mutually and socially understood and practiced. Traditional conflict resolution approaches such as judicial systems, state legislatures, commissions and other governmental systems in most cases never provide resolutions to disputes. Generally one party gains at the expense of the other especially in cases like Cameroon where the roles of customary and legislative powers are blurring. A more consensus approach to resolving water conflicts practiced much more are negotiations processes, otherwise known as “positive sum” or “integrative solutions”.

In Cameroon, we can identify customary and state laws. It is hard to say which dominates especially when they have been proves that state laws are only imposed after serious confrontations with the society. Even at that, in some cases communities have succeeded to overcome state measures. It is rather discouraging to learn of the difficulties encountered in Cameroon in harmonizing and effectively implementing laws. Past situations have proven that the smooth management of water supplies can only be possible through negotiations which seem to be bearing fruits in regions where this has been possible.

Conclusion

There is increasing recognition that "water crisis" is mainly a crisis of governance. Unfortunately, although the use of the concept of "governance" often assumes a shared understanding, in fact there exist underlying confrontations between rival theoretical bodies of knowledge and political and cultural traditions for which governance has entirely different meanings. In this chapter, we have developed a model of governance to compare governance systems. We identified five elements of governance (multi level, multi faceted problems, multi instrumental), one of which relates to the multi-level aspect. Moreover, we elaborated on change of governance patterns on the assumption that mutual adjustment will take place between the five elements of governance and that this mutual adjustment can be traced back to internal mechanisms in the governance system.

The governance system is altered when external factors intervene in one of the elements of the governance system and other elements adjust to this new situation. An important aspect of this debate concerns the question of social participation in relation to problems of water, which is a central component of the process of democratic governance. How do citizens participate and what mechanisms are available for them to participate? How are the societal goals informing water policy identified and what means are chosen to pursue them? Who are the actors and which mechanisms of democratic control exist to monitor decision makers and implementors of water policy? These and other similar questions are at the heart of the process of democratic governance, and we know that this process is undergoing a severe crisis worldwide. Unsurprisingly, this crisis of water governance is being increasingly expressed in the form of inter-, and particularly, intra-national social and political conflicts over water, which present one of the highest challenges for the scientific community involved in water research and practice. The analysis carried out in this section and our view as concerns attempted answers to the above questions will be put forward using the case of Cameroon in Part 3.

CHAPTER 4

CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK FOR ANALYZING COMMUNITY WATER GOVERNANCE IN CAMEROON

Introduction

The different ways in which governance is used in the academic literature highlight some common characteristics, particularly the idea that governance is a process that occurs when governments actively work to influence multiple agencies and organizations to achieve collective goals. In this conception it represents process in which governments play a leading but not solitary role in the exercise of authority and power. This is how the concept will be referenced in the remainder of this thesis and it is just as relevant to the local or community sphere. This chapter sets the foundation for exploring the nature of interaction between various actors in community management. Power relations and situated practices of different actors are explained. In addition, this chapter elaborates on the conceptual framework of community and participation in the context of community managed projects.

4.1 Defining Community in Various Fields of Study

In the most literary sense, community governance means governance exercised by communities themselves (Agrawal, 1999, 2001). For practical purposes, governance is understood as occurring at four levels: international, national, regional and local/community. Community governance encompasses both local and community prefixes, which are used interchangeably in relevant literatures. There is the emergence of group of theories that treat local governments as a form of community governance. In this work, these two are treated separately. Local governments still find it difficult to break down the bureaucratic and organizational boundaries between themselves. As applied to urban governance the concept of community governance demanded an overall conceptualization to place emphasis on defining spaces and the necessary relationships that can exist within cities. This involves an aggregation of interests not only by individuals but of the plurality of collective interests.

Local resources are often creditably considered to be better managed by local communities, and the contemporary policy idea is that the present level of resource degradation is the result

of traditional institutional arrangements for sustainable resource use (Bromley and Cernea, 1989). The principal cause of the demise of traditional systems for sustainable resource use is often attributed to intervention by the state – and particularly the colonial state's assertion of proprietary rights over non private resources such as water and forests (Cleaver, 2001). The growing popularity of this approach was advocated by the argument that traditional communities possess local knowledge to conserve and efficiently use resources, as they have a harmonious relationship with nature, which in turn leads to the recovery of lost traditions of community responsibility (Agrawal, 2001). Nonetheless, national governments have failed to make any alternative arrangements for local resource management regimes, which has resulted in a shift towards uncontrolled 'open access' to non-private resources (Bromley and Cernea, 1989).

In order to solve this problem, policy solutions such as the re-establishment of local users' rights and building social organizations have been advocated (Bromley and Cernea, 1989). Consequently, programmes of local institution building and encouraging local organisations such as user groups, village water users' associations and water management committees have been established on the premise of recovering traditional management practices (Nemarundwe, 2003). In recent years, the argument for the revival of the community has been put forward because of the increasing use without its exploration and relevance to application, which has led to criticism from the accepted view about 'community participation' (Nemarundwe, 2003). Thus failing to conceptualize 'community', has made the 'community participation' projects ambiguous, in terms of its utility as the 'means' or 'end' to development programmes (Ribot, 1999). Community governance and participation as illustrated in the preceding chapter came about to counteract government which was considered too hierarchical and less democratic.

In the late 1980s, a gradual movement toward understanding local communities' ability to manage natural resources started to emerge (Agrawal, 2001; Agrawal and Gibson, 2001; 1991; Ostrom, 1990, 1992; Ostrom et al., 2002;), which replaced the worldwide propaganda holding 'communities' responsible for the irrational exploitation of natural resources for selfish needs, widely known as the 'tragedy of commons' (Hardin, 1968). This evidence led to promoting community management (Agrawal and Gibson, 1999) as a solution to the 'tragedy'. Ostrom's work on common pool resource management (1990) in particular established how collective action could uplift poor communities and sustainably manage the

natural resources (McCay and Acheson, 1987; Ostrom, 1990). However, a new wave of research findings in the late 1990s highlighted the need to understand the power equation amongst communities, so that local elites would not dominate the community-based management system by excluding the poor, and powerless from the benefit of resource management (Agrawal and Gibson, 1999). The resultant effect of these findings specifically pointed out community management problems on two: firstly, the communities are not essentially bounded social or geographic units; secondly, they are not likely to be homogenous entities with single or agreed interests (Cleaver, F. (2001). There is inadequacy in the conceptualization of communities as a spatial unit, a homogenous structure and a set of shared understandings leading to equality, democracy and reciprocity in public transactions, commonly put forward by the advocates of 'community'-based conservation (Agrawal and Gibson, 1999).

Another important factor which is often overlooked is that natural resources are also heterogeneous such as water, forest etc. Hence, the way in which 'community' is conceptualized and interpreted for implementation in local development projects has a major drawback. As a result, questions arise on the specifics and parameters of identifying 'community' boundaries such as: Where do they begin and end? Who is inside and outside 'community' boundaries? Who makes up the 'community'?

Moreover, communities are not always homogeneous entities but socially differentiated and dissimilar on the grounds of class, wealth, age and origins, which divide and cut across so-called 'community' boundaries (Leach et al., 1997a), breed conflicting values and involve them in struggles (Cleaver, F. (2001). This might not involve participation by the community, as a project might continue to be top-down with just token involvement from community members (Bromley, 1992; Bromley, et al (1989). Therefore, in Cameroon and elsewhere, community water management is highly debated in both academic and policy circles due to the roles of various actors comprising 'the community' and institutions which influence, shape and transform the outcomes of community participation.

Within the social science literature, capturing the meaning of 'community' remains an unfulfilled aspiration. The way 'community' is currently conceptualized in natural resource management can be traced to the 'community' development movements of the 1950s and 1960s of many third world countries (Midgley et al., 1986). It was with the emergence of

'participatory' methods, primarily in the 1980s (Chambers, 1983), that the concept of 'community' gained eminence. However, although it was central to the issue of participatory development, it was poorly defined (Midgley et al., 1986). As a consequence, thinking of community as the lowest level of aggregation, at which people organize themselves into small, homogenous, harmonious and territorially bound units has raised a debate in social sciences.

4.1.1 Origin of the Concept and contemporary significance

The word "*community*" as defined in the Oxford Advanced Learners Dictionary of Current English refers to all the people who live in a particular area, country when talked about as a group. A second definition given to this word is: a group of people who share the same religion, race, job etc. It is also the feeling of sharing things and belongings to a group in the place where you live.

According to Williams (1983), the concept of "*community*" has found a number of practical applications in business, organizational design, government, education, professional associations, development projects, and civic life. In order to understand the meaning of this concept, we may begin by considering the history of its usage. *"Community"* is a modern word, and its history exhibits tensions between senses of domination and subordination, of generality and intimacy. It has its origins in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, when it was incorporated into late Middle English its adoption was concurrent with terms like "public" and "private", "nation" and "state", "civil" and "society", all from the governing languages of Latin and French. These terms were articulating the development of what might be called a horizontal conception of social organization. In its earliest uses, *"community"* referred either to an *organized body* of people, large or small (as in *religious community*, meaning *monastery* or *convent*), or to the common people.

In the early sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, new conceptions developed. Hence, the use of "community" shifted from *people* to their *relationships*. It could refer to *common ownership* (" hold *community* of goods"), or *social communion* or *common identity.* According to Tonnies (1922) Medieval and Renaissance senses merged in the Modern era of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, and *"community"* began referring to *the people of a district or neighbourhood*. In the context of larger and more complex social development, a

contrary sense of immediacy and locality emerged. "*Community*" and 'society' transposed their original meanings. The rationalists redeployed "society", which acquired its modern abstract and general sense of *a system of common life*. On the other hand, to most novelists, "*community"* refers to *a significant local human network*. The concept of *"community"* therefore is complex and continues in present-day usage. But the dominant sense of "*community"* persists from the Modern period, the idea of community as the network of significant relationships among a localized group of people. This sense has been given prominence, for example, in the government's policy of *Sustainable Communities*: "communities are more than just housing; they have many requirements ... economically, socially and environmentally" Michel Foucault (1974).

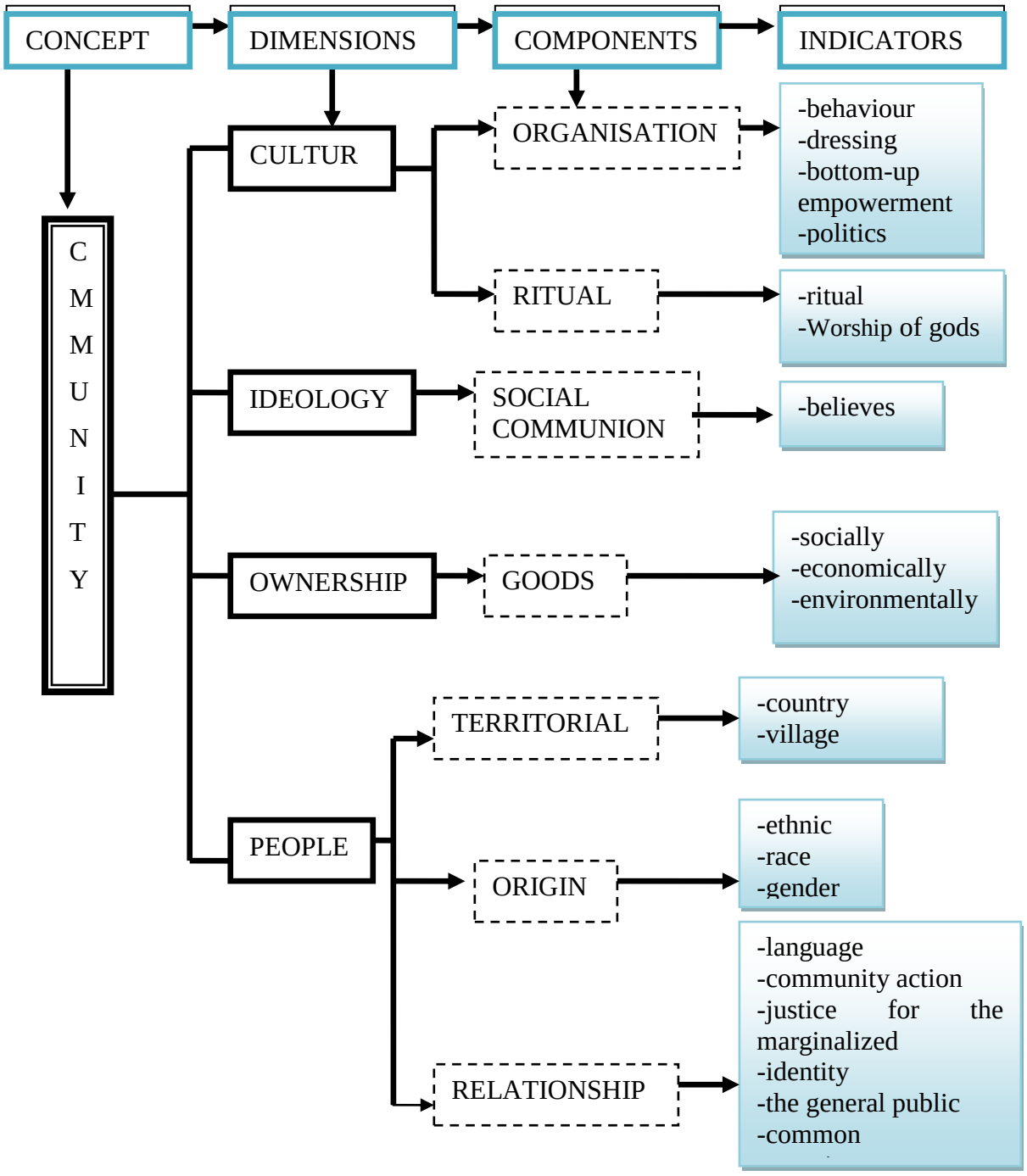
It is used in a general sense in the notions of "community politics" or "community arts" or "community relations". In these cases, the term is adopted by the participants themselves. Thus, *community politics* is about bottom-up empowerment, and *community arts* is about spontaneous, non-canonical creative action, and *community relations* is about justice for marginalized groups.

In fact according to Tonnies (1922) and Tyler (2006), there are two major divergences from the traditional notion of community, both related to issues of control, and both returning (in different ways) to the earliest notion of community as the common people. One of these divergences effectively uses "community" as a synonym for "people". In this sense, "community" is used in three increasingly specific ways. First, "community" may be used very broadly as an alternative to "general public" - for instance, "it's for government to regulate on behalf of the *community*." Secondly, and very commonly, "community" may refer to the inhabitants of a particular area. A third usage is more specific still. "Community development", or even more "community action" or "community regeneration", refer to local populations who may benefit from *development* or *action* or *regeneration*, who are thus by implication disadvantaged in some degree. All these uses exploit the connotations of "community".

Within the context of this work we have to reconsider the notions of community politics (bottom-up empowerment), community relations (justice for marginalized groups), community referring to the inhabitants of a particular area, and community development which refers to local population who may benefit from development but who are in some

degree marginalized. Following the definitions developed by the above authors a schematic model pertaining most especially to community water management was developed as illustrated

Figure 20: Elaboration of the Concept of *"Community"* (*Ngefor, G. S (2008*).



Source: Ngefor G. S. (2014)

Helen Fulcher (1989) proposes a working definition of the concept of "community" in the context of a local government, which applies to a group of people in a residential locality and having one or more of the following three dimensions: "*Perceptual*; a sense of belonging to an area or locality which can be clearly defined. *Functional*: the ability to meet with reasonable economy the community's requirements for comprehensive physical and human services. *Political*: the ability of the elected body to represent the interests and reconcile the conflicts of all its members". It is important to realize that this definition embodies two broad interpretations of the concept of community. They can be readily distinguished as subjective (perceptual) and objective (functional) dimensions in relation to qualities and measurements.

The political dimension involves both subjective and objective aspects. The first dimension of community, encompassing subjective interpretation, lays emphasizes on people's perceptions in relation to their feelings of where they belong. One can talk of community where people have an attachment or compatibility with the space and the people who live there. The people having a common interest and value systems often equate a sense of identity with the "local". The second dimension, or objective interpretation of community, looks at the existing functional relationships between people living in the same area. In has to the common dynamism of the people such as having common membership clubs, going towards a common centre for services, parishes, community organizations and projects.

The third dimension of community integral to local governments is political, and encompasses the organizational objective of participatory democracy. How all the people who use and/or contribute to common facilities and services are represented. It must be able to represent and reconcile differing interests, which will require public confidence in its leadership. However no matter the level of involvement, it is important that constituents feel or perceive that their views are represented, or that they can participate in decision making if they choose to. Community's interest can then be better defended depending on how close a group of people in a locality has these attributes. Although the three dimensions relate to different qualities however, in this dissertation the third dimension interest us most.

4.1.2 The Concept of Community in Sociological and Development Policy Debate

Development agencies are often confronted with the question, what defines a community? Although there is a debate on the nationality of community within the spectrum of social and

political theory, two approaches define the constitutive aspects of community formation. The first is based on 'consensus' or 'shared' aspects; Furthermore Giddens, conscience collective or mechanical solidarity exists on the totality of shared beliefs, rules, morals and sentiments (Giddens, 1979). Taking into account Gidden's perceptions on community, it is regarded as having social identity and solidarity. The continuity of community is assured by passing down shared norms, customs and traditions from generation to generation (Tönnies, 1957).

The second definition is Ferdinand Tönnies' concept of community, which is different from civil society because such a distinction is linked with the transition from tradition to modernity. According to Tönnies, real and organic forms of living together in a community are based upon familiarity of relations, solidarity and belongingness from the mechanical and superficial (the space of civil society or society) forms of coming together –all based on the convergence of interests (Tönnies, 1957). Community in this sense is synonymous with traditional society, which is based on relations of trust, and with the advent of modernity, trust is replaced by contracts (Tyler, 2006).

The conflict theory emphasizes a clash of interests rather than a consensus of values in the concept of community. Taking into account the conflict theory propounded by Karl Marx and Max Weber, value consensus is an illusion perpetuated by ideology and power whereby structural differences among individuals, groups and communities are subsequently formed from various interest groups with different vested interests, and are often riddled with conflicts (Tyler, 2006). Thus, conflict theory emphasizes a clash of interests rather than a consensus of values.

The development policy for the formation of community-based associations gives significant importance to consensus (Leach et al, 1999). Keeping in mind social capital, one of the most important aims of development agencies is to support and create shared networks, norms and trust among members of a community to solve common problems. Development planning has also been inspired by the above authors' notion of communicative rationality. They advocated that through arguments and counterarguments, rational and reasoned consensus could be built from amongst opposing viewpoints (Leach et al, 1999). As a result, the actions of agents involved are coordinated, not through egocentric calculations of success but through acts of reaching an understanding. "In communicative action, participants are not primarily oriented to their own successes; they pursue their individual goals under the condition that they can

harmonize their plans of action on the basis of common situation definitions" (Leach et al, 1999: 286).

Other than these aspects, developments that have triggered community-based management issues include the failure of large-scale dams projected as politically-, administratively- and contractor friendly, protests from the people (who have been displaced and alienated) and civil society against dam construction, media reporting all over the world about a looming water crisis in the twenty-first century, debates about future global wars for water and natural resources and as a result the discovery of the viability of community participation as a means of reviving community-based management.

4.1.3 Community in 'Community' Management

The irony of the word 'community' was put forward by Agrawal (1999), who advocated that its complexity and heterogeneity guarantee that it cannot easily be defined or measured simultaneously, yet its centrality to everyday life means that it cannot be displaced or dismissed. According to Cousins (1997), there is no universally shared concept of 'community'; rather, articulations that overlap in the process complement one another. Different advocates imagine that 'community' in community based management is different, and it has therefore become more of a conceptual idea loaded with complexity in its implementation (Cousins, 1997). Many consider the notion of 'community' as a myth and have discarded it, while some critics argue that it is impossible to lose or to reform what we never had (Cousins, 1992).

During the 1980s and '90s, community management started to gain importance due to several concomitant factors such as dissatisfaction with the results of large-scale, capital intensive and centrally planned conservation and development projects that excluded local populations from resource consumption. (Kohler-Koch B. et al 2001). The success of participatory projects and growing criticism of non-representative development gave momentum to the community management. Scholars like Giddens (1984) advocated that rural or traditional communities are in harmony with the environment and have demonstrated long-established patterns of sustainable and equitable use of resources.

Local resource management was supported by the developing goals of social justice, environmental health and sustainability, and so gained wider acceptance on these grounds (North, 1990). The focus also shifted onto 'community' due to the emergence of analyses which showed that many changes in resource status are not primarily the result of human actions or interventions (Nemarundwe, 2003). The further popularity of the concept also came to the fore because of the role played by various NGOs and an increasing preference for participatory approaches by donor agencies (Agrawal and Gibson, 1999).

Defining community management is not an easy task. Various governments have demonstrated importance in the 'participation' of 'community' owing to political economic pressure (Ntsebesa, 2006). The agenda of donor agencies is to promote local participation for the 'sustainable' management of resources and development, through transferring resource management into the hands of local communities (Hecht and Cockburn, 2011). On the other hand, representatives of the indigenous people advocate respect for local rights, knowledge and cultures in order to better serve local interests (Giddens 1984; Cousins, 1992). Based on the premise that local people have greater interest in the sustainable use of resources than the state, along with suppositions that local communities are more aware of the details of local ecological processes and practices and in a cyclical manner are more able to effectively manage local resources through traditional forms of access, community management programmes are grounded and endorsed (Giddens, 1984). Moreover, in the community management discourse, local communities are usually empowered to run appropriate institutions for natural resource management (Cousins, 1992). Hence, local communities are considered more organizationally cost-effective, as their members are expected to be in everyday social contact – leading to informal peer pressure to mitigate high transition costs – while community management initiatives often draw inspiration from the abovementioned images of a community.

Nevertheless, not all 'community' decisions and actions with regard to natural resources are effective. Many times, 'face-to-face' relationships often considered inoffensive for participation, may lead to disagreements leading to conflicts (Mc Cay et al, 1987). Hence, images of the 'community' are central to the issues of project implementation. Literature, policies and projects dealing with the issue of community management have depicted communities as a distinct social group in one geographical location, having a common culture and living in harmony (Leach et al., 1999; Ntsebesa, 1996, 2006).

Moreover, common property theorists have propagated in their arguments about the unified homogenous notion of community, the importance of informal institutions, efficiency, equity and sustainability (Agrawal, 2001). By emphasizing the role of local institutions in making local communities capable of cooperating with each other, for the access and control of natural resources, the common property theorists have underestimated power dimensions. This reinforces the notions of 'community' further in water management (Platteau, 2003; Ostrom, 1990).

Common property resources (CPRs) literature was formulated in response to Hardin's (1968) cynical 'tragedy of the commons'. CPRs literature makes a distinction between open access situations (to which Hardin's thesis could be somewhat applicable) and true common situations in which institutions play an important role in regulating resource use and its management (Bromley and Cernea, 1989). A large body of literature on CPR management has been fundamental in establishing the significance of local institutions in natural resource management. Common property theorists have suggested that individuals will collectively manage common resources when the benefits from the institutional set-up (i.e. rules and means of enforcement) are limited to a small and stable community (McCay and Acheson, 1987; Ostrom, 1990). Common property theorists like Ostrom (1990) take their theoretical grounding from game theory to look at the collective action dilemma, and state that institutions or rules can be purposively crafted to produce collective action and to perform certain natural resource management functions. Ostrom, through comparative studies, finds that the successful management of commonly pooled resources by local communities often shares a set of eight 'design principles': i) clearly defined boundaries; ii) rules congruent with local conditions; iii) individuals affected can participate in modifying operational rules; iv) monitors are accountable to the appropriators; v) graduated sanctions against violators; vi) ready access to conflict-resolution mechanisms; vii) recognition of rights to organize by external government authorities and viii) nested enterprises, where the resource is part of a larger system (Ostrom, 1990).

A design principle or coordination for Ostrom is "an essential element or condition that helps to account for the success of these institutions in sustaining the common pool resources (CPRs), and gaining the consent of generation after generation of appropriators to the rules in use" (Ostrom, 1990:90). Most of the CPR literature considers local situations and establishes conditions (widely known as Ostrom principles), which will lead to collective action by

indicating clear resource boundaries and socio-economic homogeneity among users (Ostrom, 1990). Consequently, historical and contemporary evidence on the 'commons' has shown that resource users often create institutional arrangements and management regimes that help them to distribute benefits justifiably, over long periods and with only limited efficiency losses (Agrawal, 1999; Ostrom, 1992). Therefore reversing Hardin's (1968) perspective of the tragedy of the commons. Although empirical evidence suggests that the design principle sees communities as homogenous entities, in reality there is great diversity in communities in terms of class, wealth, age, gender, ethnicity and religion (Agrawal and al, 2001, 1999; Leach and al., 1997).

Similarly, and based on empirical evidence, scholars have suggested that only very small groups can organize themselves effectively in the manner suggested by design principles, because they presume that size is related to homogeneity (Agrawal, 2001). In recent years, Ostrom's design has been critiqued by development practitioners and researchers on the basis that it employs "simplistic assumptions of single resource use, a static rationality model, the exclusive analysis of internal dynamics of the collective management system and the assumption that collective management outcomes are determined by predefined principles" (Leach et al., 1999). Moreover, design principles have neglected the role of contextual and external factors such as market demands, technology and population pressures, and how state policies interact with local institutions and natural resource systems in shaping collective action (Agrawal, 2001). Design principles have been criticized as being too limited for analyzing dynamic resource management institutions (Agrawal et al, 1999). While some studies have critiqued them for romanticising indigenous knowledge systems, whereas in reality these knowledge systems have been comprehensively interfered with and often exist as a shadow of their original form (Platteau, 2003; Ribot, 1999).

Taking this homogenous view of 'community' given by property theorists, academic works on institutions have neglected questions concerning the differences and conflicting interests of resource users (Mehta et al., 1999). Works on collective action theory have neglected the fact that institutions, apart from enhancing co-operation, can also overwhelm conflict, factional divisions and power politics (Mehta et al., 1999). Moreover, common property theorists have focused on local groups, institutions and resource system-related factors, and have ignored the riddle of the local –communities exist within a larger environment.

In taking this perspective, communities cannot be seen as static as they are composed of people who interpret and shape the world around them (Long and Long, 1992). On the whole, this perspective sees social change in society differently from community management narratives, which instead talk about external disruption to a community. There is a certain level of inadequacy in the conceptualization of communities' spatial units, homogenous structures and sets of shared understanding, as commonly put forward by advocates of the 'community'-based management (Agrawal and Gibson 1999). They argue on the one hand that, at a representational level, existing communities rarely correspond to the idea of small, harmonious, cooperative entities with shared understandings (Agrawal and Gibson 1999). On the contrary, at the conceptual level, a direct relationship between 'community'-as-shared understanding and 'community'-as-social organization is not easy to establish (Agrawal and Gibson 1999). Recent community management studies have begun to examine the heterogeneity of communities and how resource management decentralization has affected different community groups and how communities can influence water governance. These studies have shown that management by communities, which consist of multiple actors who have numerous, and often competing, interests goes beyond the mere targeting of appropriate 'communities'. This is because in communities in reality are highly differentiated along several lines that include political, economic and social aspects as we will be demonstrating in the subsequent sections of this dissertation.

Some authors view the community concept as "local governance" and still in this light, Demante (2008) holds that there exist a few precise definitions. He puts forward a definition proposed by UNCDF that local governance aims at transferring powers to local population in view of realizing an economic and political development led by the population themselves and which lays emphasis on poverty reduction. Local governance thus implies the vertical transfer of responsibility and resources from the central government to the territorial collectivities as well as the development of horizontal network between these collectivity and the non-state actors.

While attempting a definition of the notion of governance, Froger and Oberti (2002) point out the fact that it replaces the government which they emphasize is strongly led by the state and has portrayed much limits. Contrary thus to state action which they qualify as "authoritative governance" they propose "participative governance" which entails the implication of all stakeholders in the decision-making process- that is in the conception of rules, norms and

policies in order to meet up with environmental demands. In this light these authors put forward a definition of governance as the capacity to produce coherent decisions, develop effective policies by coordinating between public and nongovernmental actors, within a fragmented arena. We will notice that progressively, communities have developed the initiative of conceiving projects of collective interest which necessitate real dialogue between actors, transparency and taking into account of their points of view and interest for a proper functioning.

Much diversity exist in Cameroon as concerns the community philosophy in the management of potable water projects. This controversy magnifies as there exist a multiplicity of visions, perceptions and definitions of this concept by researchers, international organizations and water actors. The concept of "community" has itself been the subject of much discussion by a range of academics such as political scientists, social geographers, sociologists and community psychologists. "Most students are in basic agreement that community consists of persons in social interaction within a geographic area and having one or more additional ties" (Lekunze, 2001).

However, of the concepts offered to replace it, none seem to do so adequately. Such expressions as common identity, affinity, collective perspective, sharing common concerns, sense of common purpose, core of commonality, sense of belonging, a coherent social and economic whole, acting in the interests of community, and speaking with a united voice, have been put forward, yet each tends to cover only some aspects of the broad dimensions in which the concept of "community "can be applied in local government. Within the framework of my master's thesis this concept was developed to direct the reflection of readers to a common view of the notion with famous authors like Richard Tyler (2006) and Foucault (1974) who traced the origin of this term as far back as the fourteenth century.

4.2 Community Participation and democracy: inevitable instruments in local development

The concept of participation has increasingly gained importance over the last two decades in the form of collective action, community-driven development, governance, etc. in developmental practice, as well as in the common pool resource research and literature. The need for the participation of local communities and decentralized governance comes from

perspectives such as critique of the centralization of power in bureaucracy. Hence, there is growing consensus about the desirability of a participatory model for natural resource management through community involvement, as it aims to empower local people by increasing their direct access to and control over resources.

Advocates of the participatory model belong to two groups: the first views participation as a means to achieve institutional efficiency, while the other considers participation as a way to achieve empowerment, equity and democratic governance (Platteau, 2003). Over a period of time the term 'participation' has acquired various meanings and still continues to be a fuzzy concept, as at one end of the spectrum it could mean nominal membership in a group and at the other end it could imply having an effective voice in the decision-making process Often, the participation of local communities or resource users is seen as a means of achieving equitable goals. However, the question arises as to what constitutes 'a community' and who participates in community formation for resource management.

The logic behind participatory approaches to water governance is the ostensible reasoning for addressing inequalities, by distributing the benefits of local management initiatives within the community, which will lead to community development through new opportunities (Ribot, 1999). Participation itself is a socially entrenched phenomenon and cannot be discussed singly (Nemarundwe, 1995). This means that the people are not free to participate in created or invited arenas of participation without first entering into the realm of local power dynamics. The success of community management is not possible without taking into account the actors involved in resource management. Meanwhile participatory approaches to natural resource management cannot bypass structural and institutional constraints arising from power relations and interactions in a given community (Mehta, L. et al 1999). Therefore, unequal relations need to be assessed in relation to the power that each actor commands on the bases of class and gender for example, and which actor influences the outcome of development projects.

One has to be vigilant while using the concept of participation as a means of ensuring better community involvement, as it has many forms and magnitudes. Seen from the context of community management, the concept of participation is problematic, as it is variously defined in different contexts. There is a debate among writers who have theorized on the concept of participation regarding the nature and range or the means and ends of the participation.

Participation takes many forms such as Agarwal's (2001) drawing from Arnstein participation developed a typology for measuring participation in table II, it occurs along a continuum from nominal to interactive participation.

Table 14: Participation Typology and its Characteristic

Form/Level of Participation	Characteristics
Nominal participation	Membership in the group
Passive participation	Being informed of decisions ex post facto; or attending meetings and listening in on decision-making without speaking
Consultative participation	Being asked for an opinion on specific matters without the guarantee of influencing the decisions.
Activity-specific participation	Being asked to (volunteering to) undertake specific tasks
Active participation	Expressing opinions whether or not solicited, or taking initiatives of other kinds
Interactive (empowering) participation	Having a say and influence in the group's decision

Source: Agarwal, 2001:1624

In this typology of participation, the least desirable form of participation is nominal participation and the highest is interactive. Typology helps us to distinguish between people who were involved just for the sake of it, and those people or groups who had all the powers to make a difference and take decisive and influential courses of action. Thus, it is necessary to study how participation is apparent within the various water-related community groups. Nemarundwe's (2003) analysis on participation also reflected in this typology in terms of objectives, is judged almost entirely by its potential efficiency effects and its ability to enhance equity, efficiency, empowerment and environmental sustainability. Besides this, there are different perspectives on who is expected to participate, what exactly is to be achieved and how it should be done.

Agarwal's typology helps to evaluate the quality of participation of actors in a given participatory development intervention, as achieving effective participation would involve a shift from lower (nominal participation) to higher levels (interactive participation). Given the pre-existing socio-economic inequalities and power relations in a given community, there are limits as to what participation alone (interactive participation) can achieve in terms of equity

and efficiency (Nemarundwe, 2003), even in community participation in community management.

Taking the case of the Cameroon Western Highlands, rural communities are highly differentiated and stratified hierarchically. In this light, at times, the transfer of decision making power to "the local community" leads to handing over decision making authority to dominant factions. The quality and form of community participation in democratic local governance in such communities depends to a large extent on the characteristics of the local community itself (See a configuration of the loca1 arena in figure 21 below).

According to Platteau (2003), community-based development is often open to monopolization by the elite, especially in localities with high inequalities. The concept of participation from equity- or agency-based perspectives ends up looking at a community as an undifferentiated, cohesive whole (Platteau, 2003). Both views tend to ignore that a community has a space of internal differentiation, contestation and power differentials. Moreover, social capital theorists seem to ignore the existence of 'bad social capital' (Nemarundwe, 2003), as norms of trust, reciprocity and cooperation also exist in the very coercive, hierarchical and exclusive communal formations. Hence, if advocates of community participation do not capture the dynamics of community participation, they are ignoring the fact that a community could constitute bad social capital and is a space occupied by hierarchies, power differentials and social-economic disparities. Privileging locals in policymaking, without taking into account the important characteristic of community, could mean sanctioning differences between money and social power, which in turn means excluding those who do not have such power (Platteau, 2003).

As a result, this study uses Agarwal's typology to examine how different sections of the community participate in development. It also throws light on the power relations within the Cameroon Western Highland communities. Moreover, it permits us to analyze communities' influence on participatory processes and their intervention in local development projects like water schemes. As mentioned in the preceding chapters the thesis uses an actor oriented approach in order to assess the ways and forms that actors seek to exert control over water resources in relation to other actors, including how weaker actors resist their powerful counterparts in small towns and rural settings. This helps in understanding the working of

different actors in the heterogeneous Western Highland communities in order to achieve their interests.

4.2.1 Concept of Power

The concept of agency is inexorably associated with power. In order to understand the social interactions in relation to natural resource management, one needs to examine how power is conceptualized. In a social context, power is not just possessed, accumulated and unproblematically implemented (Foucault, 1974). Indeed, it is not how hierarchies and hegemonic control distinguish social positions and prospects and hamper access to resources (Cousins, 1992; 1997). Power is the outcome of multi struggles and negotiations over authority, status, reputation and resources and requires networks of actors and community (Bromley, 1992). Manoeuvring requires consent and negotiations with power and is manifested in the form of exerting some control, prerogative, authority and the capacity to take direct or indirect action (Bromley, 1992).

Consequently, power unavoidably engenders resistance, accommodation and strategic conformity in the politics of everyday life (Cleaver, 2001). Therefore, "all forms of dependence offer some resources whereby those who are subordinate can influence the activities of their superiors" (Giddens, 1984:16). All actors exercise some kind of 'power' and influence and manipulate strategies, while those who are in a subordinate position are also key players in the game (Long, 2001). Power is a relational concept which is shaped by different types of relationships that actors engage in and negotiate. Moreover, power is viewed as a resource that can easily change hands. As no one particular actor has power at a particular time to the extent that others with whom he/she relates are lacking, the concept of power is a very useful analytical tool for understanding leadership and other struggles among community members in natural resource management. In formal institutional settings with centralized governance models, devolution of authority is one of the several strategies proposed to curb concentrated powers and increase democracy. In the next section we will examine decentralization as a strategy to encourage participation, transparency and equity.

4.2.2 Decentralization, Participation, Institutions and Power in community management

Decentralization in various forms since the 1970s has been recommended as a way of reducing problems of development and resource management that occur when a highly centralized public agency is used to manage natural resources in different localities (Ostrom et al., 1993). The decentralization process aims to empower local communities by involving them in resource conservation and management through active engagement in decision making processes. The advocates of decentralization argue that when local actors, are involved in the decision making process, they tend to invest substantial as amounts of time and labour in ensuring the sustainable utilization of those resources (Cohen, 1985). In the decentralization process, existing power roles, responsibility for planning and implementation and administrative capacity are redefined by the state at various levels in order to ensure that regulation, management and control over decision making within the scope of the conservation intervention are transferred to local communities (Agrawal and Gibson, 1999). In worldwide community management programmes various forms of decentralization have been recommended as way of reducing the problems that occur when extremely centralized state machinery is used to manage natural resources (Ostrom et al., 1993). Decentralization is defined as the transfer of powers from central government to lower levels in a political-administrative and territorial hierarchy (Agarwal and Ribot, 1999:3-4). It occurs in two forms, either through 'deconcentration' or 'devolution'.

In the former style, central government transfers some of its power to lower levels, but these remain responsible and accountable to central government, which reserves the right to supervise, overturn or withdraw the entrustments (Ostrom et al., 1993).

Ostrom et al. (1993:164) refer to deconcentration as the 'temporary devolution' of authority within a bureaucracy to lower level officials, combined with enhanced opportunities for citizen participation. In research activities related to water management, the participation of local people has also proved to be crucial, because local people provide invaluable insights in the interconnections between water, environment and society (Cohen, 1985). Thus, the local people and their context related information are actually seen as important tools for planning. The basic idea is that local people should be taken into consideration during planning process in order to secure social and ecological sustainability as well as to minimize long term

economical costs. Other reasons to claim for participation in addition to the creation of tools for planning are to realize the rights of the local as well as to give local people tools for taking care of their living environment themselves. Platteau (2003) brings out different forms of participation from the citizen point of view; they can participate independently or supported by the administration, and they can use institutional or direct means to affect decision-making. Though, Cousins (1997) has noticed that the official system has difficulties of reaching people's everyday life. Consequently, most development projects lack transparent and democratic measures.

The word democracy literally means "rule by the people." Its realization has often been criticized because of the difficulty to the representatives to stand for varying interests and the constituents to really be able to influence by voting. Tyler's study (2006) shows that formal democracy does not guarantee transparency nor participation. Instead, every day practices, commitment and taking account the divergent interests are highlighted as a base for governance and democracy. According to Mc Cay et al (1987), decentralization denotes a process or situation in which powers and responsibilities are transferred from a central authority to other, usually to more local organs. The term can be employed in relation to the political decision-making process, to the distribution of powers between elected authorities and to the organization of the bureaucracy (Leach et al, 1997b). This means creation of new decision-making bodies or new responsibilities within the composition of existing actors.

The form of decentralization where authority is transferred to the representative, and downwardly accountable actors have autonomous, discretionary decision making power and resources to make decisions significant to the lives of local people, is known as 'permanent devolution'. In this form, entrustments are transferred more or less completely to the local authorities or users (Ostrom et al., 1993). Most community management initiatives aim at devolving entrustments to local communities. Furthermore, decentralization has coincided with the mainstreaming of participatory approaches in development theory and practice, advocating that the local community should play a greater role in the management of natural resources (Chambers, 1993, 1995).

The participatory development model led by Chambers (1994) advocated 'participation' as the foremost technique for achieving equitable resource management goals, which would help the poor and the marginalized sections of the community to have greater access and control in

the decision making process regarding natural resource management (Agarwal, 2001). Hence, the creation of an arena enabling people's involvement presumes that everyone will have an equal opportunity in the local community to participate and benefit accordingly. Often, development practitioners believe that community-based management interventions will lead to conservation, sustainable use and the development of a wide spectrum of actors. It is only recently that community management studies have begun to look into the heterogeneity of communities and how resource management decentralization has affected different community groups such as the landless, lower castes, religious-ethno groups and women (Mehta, 2005). The danger involved in the direct transfer of power to communities in participatory interventions results in diverse and often counterproductive outcomes for the participating community. As power imbalances in a given community or among diverse actors often lead to powerful elitism within a community, they use this opportunity to consolidate their own positions.

In this section, we emphasis on planning and coordination from the view point of long-term planning of the Cameroonian government, NGO's and individuals. We will focus on the interests of the central public sector against the interests of the other actors. According to Mehta, et al (1999:507), whether we look at historians, sociologists, or anthropologists, "among the recurring features are: social hierarchies, exercise of power, relational rigidity, patriarchal dominance, peasant docility, distance between the state and the people, a lack of general trust and social fragmentation". There are some clear changes in the perceptions of local authorities, and indeed of local politics. Rules and arenas for political competition are different from what they used to be, and there are new and more different actors present: it is local elite groups – whether party-, patronage-, military-, kinship- or economically-based – that complete for the wider political space (Cleaver, (2001). Still, the progress of decentralization is seen rather limited (Mareth et. al. 2001; Agrawal and al, 1999), According to them the weak decentralization is because government and its agencies have not fully realigned their systems and because the responsibilities are not clearly defined.

In the decentralization of resource management discourse, there has also been a renewed debate on the role of institutions in water management in the context of community managed projects. This thesis takes into account the role of both formal and informal institutions within community management. Informal institutions are not legally recognized by the state through

cultural norms, beliefs, practices, values or social network and kinship ties; instead, they are upheld by mutual agreement (unwritten) which is enforced endogenously (Cousins, 1997).

Informal institutions themselves shape and are shaped by the everyday negotiations and power relations between diverse actors, whereas formal institutions represent rules that require third party enforcement and apply to law courts (Leach et al., 1997a). As a result, the image of 'community institutions' in the context of community management is incomplete if it overlooks the complex webs of interactions, informal institutions and contestations over resource control within groups from participating communities.

Therefore, in everyday practices formal and informal boundaries often become blurred. Actors positioned in formal and informal institutions and their participation are directly influenced by the power dynamics operating at grassroots level. In the light of the above discussion relating to various contextual and contested issues characterizing, community-based management interventions, I now proceed to investigate the specific issues arising from community participation in these interventions.

4.2.3 Participation and Power Relations

This chapter answers to the second research question: how can the powers and accountability framework of local actors (all stakeholders) be guided to ensure efficient and sustainable projects? A question which could be summarized as: are there possibilities for cooperation within the interest groups of water management in Cameroon? This question is approached through power and the role of the central state in relation to other actors. At the same time, power relations within communities are reviewed. According to Swyngedouw, (2004), two tasks are required in assessing organizational systems. In the first place, the principal organizational actors need to be identified on a meaningful basis. Secondly, the power of these various actors needs to be assessed. This section will proceed from resources and interests of the central state to comparing them to the resources of other national or local interest groups (the context and the international actors have already been introduced in chapter 2). Finally, the conflicting interests and possibilities for cooperation between the actors will be discussed here theoretically and then concretely in chapters 5, 6 and 7.

4.2.3.1 Civil Society's Interests, Conflicts and Cooperation

Interests are the base of the motivation for action, in planning and management. They are helpful to make out future directions of politics and decision-making, as cooperation and conflicts between the actors are based on interests and interests groups. According to Mc Carthy (2005), practical definition of interests is "a connection with something which affects your attitude to it, especially because you may benefit from it in some way". An interest party or in this study, an interest group, is logically "a group of people who share the same aims which they want to protect" (Syyngedouw et al, 2004). Thus, this study sees interests simply as preferences and aims to be protected. However, it is hard to 'choose' one's aim to be protected. It is also hard for individuals to identify their best interest from their scale of preferences and this has been a "subject of a long debate in philosophy and social theory, based on concern that individuals may potentially be misled, misinformed, immature, or, more problematically, irrational" (Ribot, 2002). Interests often stem from values. In the case of water management, the perceptions about the meaning of water as well as about the possibility to participate, affect the attitudes and the goals of actors. Values are also weighted within a certain time perspective and geographical scale. In this sense the interests of the planners and the individuals often collide.

Tensions created by colliding interests are often seen as an unfortunate state which would disappear in more favourable circumstances. In a pluralist view, Swyngedouw (2004), suggest otherwise and shares the view that "conflict will always be in organizations, either explicit or covert. The point is to be aware of them and to actively reconcile them". Swyngedouw (2004) has defined three main reasons for conflicts, three conditions for the use of power. These conditions are interdependence, heterogeneous goals and scarcity. Interdependence in this light means the organizational participants are tied together, such that each is concerned with what the other does and the outcome. In the absence of such interdependence, there would be no basis for conflict or for interaction among the participants. Heterogeneous goals can stem from the heterogeneous beliefs about technology, or the relationship between decisions and outcomes. In so far as resources are insufficient to meet the demands of participants, choices have to be made concerning the allocation to those resources. The greater the scarcity as compared to the demand, the greater the power and the effort to be exerted in resolving the decision. (Swyngedouw, 2004)

In addition to conflicts, cooperation (acting for a common goal) is an important element of politics: in water management, Nemarundwe (2003) reminds that none of the actors alone is able to govern the whole field. Both phenomena, conflict and cooperation can be created vertically as well as horizontally; that is within and between institutional and territorial levels, e.g. international, national or local levels or governmental and non-governmental bodies. Whether the conflict results ultimately in politics, is it certain that use of power in organizational settings depends upon two other conditions, the importance of the decision issue or the resource, and the distribution of power. Political activity, bargaining, and coalition formation occur primarily when power is dispersed. "When power is highly centralized, the centralized authority makes decisions using its own rules and values" (Swyngedouw, 2004). This situation widens the gap between users in a community. To reduce this excessive control by powerful groups in order to increase community participation many authors propose different possibilities, such as ensuring accountability and equity. To other authors, reciprocal actions between partners can integrate communities better.

In this light, Sabourin (2008) while working on the relationship of peasant farmers in Brazil adds his view on the concept of community and insist on "reciprocity" of all the actors involved in any "common project". He views reciprocity to be different economic categories of exchange and associated to redistribution. The logic of reciprocity aims thus to enlarge the social relationship between actors through the redistribution of powers. From Sabourin's discussion we can deduce that an effective community management of a common resource as water supply projects depends on the "actors, their powers and accountability" framework that exist. In order for a water project to be managed democratically there is need to involve "representative local actors who are entrusted with real powers and who are accountable to the local population as a whole" (Ribot, 2002). It is thus worth mentioning that the type of actors who are empowered in community water projects shape the outcomes that can be expected. There is therefore need for vertical (up-down as well as bottom-up) accountability and cooperation between all the actors. In this context in addition to rendering all actors accountable, other authors talk of reciprocal relations.

4.2.3.2 Reciprocity as a driving force in community organizations and development in Cameroon

The traditional organization in Cameroon is based on reciprocity (see for example "njangi"[44] generally known as "tontine" in the Western region) in agriculture, house building, saving and many other forms of social co-operation). The decisive element of reciprocity is the people's recognition that most of their own needs cannot be satisfied efficiently based only on their own capacities and resources. As De Benoist (2004) puts it, *"imagining an individual free of constituent attachment is not looking at a free being, but is imagining a being with no depth no personality"*. De Benoist (2004) adds that, *"nobody can be defined solely as an individual among others but always as a being related to, as a member of a specific community, be it political, cultural, linguistic, religious or other"*. The interacting partners therefore establish forms of mutual co-operation based on the "exchange" of gifts and counter-gifts that are beneficial for all the actors involved (Mauss, 2004; Polanyi, 1944).

Apart from this practical aspect, "reciprocity implies a dialectical relation between material and social goods" (Rist, 2001). We found out a social good of high importance for every community member is "social prestige". It remains the basis for anyone who wants to become leader in the community for instance. The Fai of Yer[45] expresses what it means to earn "social prestige" in order to become a leader (box 7):

Box 8: the village head's view of leadership

"As a leader you are depending on your own effort. It is true, you must work hard. You are not going to sit down and wait. You need to be very active in the community and when you do many many things people will be interested in you … Some go around with bread and such things. But that is wrong! If you choose to be a leader through finances, I think the leader will not do well. Because if he is spending money to get the position, he will like to get back that money he spent before he will do anything for the community. If somebody wants leadership, first of all he must go in and know the quality of a good leader. Once you know it and you follow up, you will be the person. Yes, you will be chosen. Well, to be a good leader you must be honest; the ability must be there, you must be pushy and you must be punctual and you must be hard-working …"

[44] "njangi" is a local term given to small groups which could be called informal banks. A group of individuals come together with two main objectives contributing money and handing money to each individual on regular time intervals. Secondly, saving money which can be borrowed by members, and in most cases these savings are shared to the various members at the end of the year.

[45] "fai" is a title bestowed on you by the chief and community, meaning sub chief, this title can be inherited from your parents. It can also be acquired after the realization of a great job in the eyes of the community

The testimony shows that an aspiring leader requires a profile of well-defined social competencies that is built over time. Thus any would be leader requires a lot of effort, more of social than financial, because it induces people to an individualistic behaviour that is in sharp contrast with the ethic principle of gaining "social prestige" through reciprocity between the future leader and the community.

In practical terms, setting aside social status there is a lot of "investment" of considerable amount of time, energy, natural and financial resources into the social networks of the village because they are the only sources that can provide counter-gifts or "social prestige". It's worth nothing that of the western highlanders, the westerners (more than the north westerners) are more dynamic financially and consequently the community is fashioned accordingly.

However, reciprocity-based social relations always are coexists with economic relations that are committed to the capitalistic market economy (Polanyi, 1944). Traditionally, these relations could be identified at the external spaces of villages. Economic relations came about with cash crops to the communities and today they persist because of the growing importance of off-farm activities. This, combined with the dependent relations between urban and rural spaces, has the effect that the monetary economy (community of interest) is beginning to have an increasing importance in the regulation of the internal community organization. It's in this light that De Benoist while attempting a definition of identity defines community as a *"privileged place where reciprocal recognition (intersubjectivity) and therefore self esteem, have a chance to develop"*. To him *"each community is first of all a community of meaning, signification and as such, it ensures a form of communication favourable to individual recognition"*. In view of De Benoist's perception, he focuses on an eventual individual recognition in any collective action. In the case of community water supplies, individuals will cease to participate (intersubjectivity) in any common action if they don't feel the gains individually.

Reciprocity is not only practiced by adult community members only. Every village has different "age groups" (e.g. manjong, chong in Kumbo), which are associations of peer groups of young people. There exists some sort of hierarchy and the first age group for boys is around the ages 8-10 years. To adhere to an association, they pay a new-comer fee (or a "gift") which is usually provided by one of the parents, brothers or sisters. The different groups organize meetings regular and assign certain tasks to some of its members. Most of the

groups are created by elders and village elites. Later, they become a kind of mentor to the group. The creation of an age group must be authorized by the Fon.

Most age groups are normally created in the quarter of its initiator. In any one village then, there are several age groups of peers, with competitive aims trying to gain more "prestige" by fulfilling their ceremonial functions or participating systematically in community works. Most age groups pass through a number of stages till their members attain maturity between 24 and 30 years, at the same time reaching social maturity (eligibility for marriage). These groups have many functions; they serve as platforms of social learning such as principles of reciprocity and social competence which will be very helpful to them later to become leaders. The elders monitor the social performance of the members carefully. In case of special merits, the Fon can distinguish the members by assigning them to some community positions.

Reciprocity is a phenomenon within a family. Madam Jessica from Kumbo told us that as a mother besides her agricultural work and the household, she needed to work by selling vegetables in a nearby school to pay for a better education for her son. Her son, presently without a job, then continued the conversation as follows:
"*At the high school I needed a lot of money. I was doing sciences … When I finished I got some work, and when it ended I came back. Then I saw the house that they (his parents) were living in, and I realized that they were living in such bad conditions because they made me study. Therefore, when I came back, the first thing I did was to build this new house (where we were sitting). I had nothing to give them. So I thought I should build a house for them to stay. That was the only thing I could do*." Rist (2001)

The testimony shows that reciprocity cannot only be understood in function of the practical or economic advantages it offers. It illustrates clearly that reciprocity has an emotional dimension: the efforts put in by his parents created an emotional need to compensate the gifts received. In case the counter-gift (the house he built) is considered too small, people do really feel bad.

Nevertheless internal community network building cannot be based only on reciprocity. Meanwhile reciprocal relations between communities and other partners are quite different. Unlike the above mentioned case where the receiver has the wish to acknowledge, reciprocal actions from communities towards their partners are based on power relations. In chapter 5 we

highlight the relations between aid agencies and communities. The histories of the water projects to be studied in the different villages will serve as good examples. In the perspective of the villages, the combination of internal and external contributions in cash and kind are not only the best way to bring together the different resources required for the development of water supplies. From the point of view of reciprocity, in order to realize community-based management, there is need for co-operation between village organization and external institutions.

The fact that capital (social, economic financial) comes from different members of the community such as mobilization of cash and labour, mainly contributed by the villagers Village Development Associations (VDA) and elites, guarantees on the one hand that in the water management every person has the same right. On the other hand, the fact that the water projects is the result of a joined effort from internal and external institutions allows to avoid a feeling of guilt that might arise in the villagers had they received the entire contribution from outside/support organizations. Reviewing the lessons learnt that communities are integrated in all stages (planning, building and managing) of the community water project gives some additional points on how reciprocity (internal-external) can have a direct impact on social organization in villages.

Most researchers interested in the domain of community water supplies hold that there is capture of most, if not all projects by minority elite. At this juncture, we seek to understand why in a country like Cameroon, where powers to manage suburban and rural water projects have been devolved to private bodies, aren't there appropriate legal and regulatory texts guiding the existence of these institutions operating in such a delicate domain as potable water supply. The local arena in Cameroon is becoming more of an open market (free entry and exit of institutions depending on degree of achievement of their benefits) where multiple actors freely operate at the expense of the already very low income population.

As a key accountability mechanism, elections need to be carefully scrutinized. While they may be important, (if there exist) they are not always well structured or sufficient to guarantee participation. In cases where procedural democracy appears to be in place, whether it is accountable in practice is yet another question. There is wide agreement that "accountability of local governance institutions constitute a major problem of democratic programmes" (Olowu 2001). This view is supported by Froger and Oberti (2002) where they hold that

"*experts have changed status and cannot still impose their science to the population. The society does not only ask for leaders but also defaulters"*. Defaulters in this sense do not only mean upward accountability but a situation where the water management committees, elites, the *Fon*, NGOs etc could also be downwardly accountable to the rest of the community. Though decisions and/or public expertise seem to be inappropriate as is the case of many projects. The idea in the domain of community water supplies is to arrive at sharing responsibilities to all actors and to generate new relations between expertise, the exercise of democracy and public decisions what is termed by Froger (2002) as mutual confidence.

Jaglin (2005) highlights this collective perception by putting forward equity as a major instrument of democracy, whereby she distinguishes between vertical and horizontal equity. She insist on horizontal equity as the best option that reinforces participation and democracy. In the following section we will be presenting how the concepts outlined apply in the communities studied. While theorizing the concepts of "community" and governance", we have retained that effective water governance depends on an understanding and integration of the local population.

It is in this light that we will be presenting how western Highland communities are organized and how they function. Our aim is to answer two sub questions derived from our main question of this study. They include; to what extent can the state abide to local norms, rules and secondly how can homogenous rules be applied taking into consideration the heterogeneity of this region?

To proceed with our analysis we need an understanding of how these communities are organized, the legitimacy of its leaders (chieftaincy) and the intra and inter-community relations. In the next section we aim to analyze socio-cultural aspects affecting actors' participation in and their strategies concerning water management by various community groups, and how their capacity to participate is determined directly by their relative power position within their communities.

4.3 Social Stratification: Understanding the concept of community in the Western Highlands

Often, the participation of local communities is seen as a means of achieving equitable goals, but the question arises as to what constitutes 'a community' and what factors facilitate their participation in water development. The section considers the emerging spontaneous

interactions between actors as they respond to the intervention processes while drawing on their informal networks. In addition, I attempt to adopt ethnographic enquiry as a methodological tool to map the roles and strategies taken on by the key actors in the various water-related community groups in the Cameroon Western Highlands. We will map the interactions and negotiations which characterize their participation in the formal space of the water schemes. The informal everyday cultural practices and local traditions that are followed at local community level in the Cameroon Western Highlands are also mapped to gain insight into the immediacy and meanings attached to water in everyday occurrences. This thesis also engages with these inquests in order to gain a better understanding of the multifaceted nature of small town social fabric and its implications for contemporary and future community management interventions through informal arenas and networks – thus defining access to and the control of water in user groups, "collective" borewell ownerships and exchange practices.

In addition, this chapter empirically depicts how the quality and form of community participation within the community water depends to a large extent on the characteristics of the local community itself. The chapter demonstrates that the village community is influenced by caste, class, gender, ethnicity and wealth and comprises actors with varied interests, who are involved in shaping the outcome of any development interventions, such as the watershed project in the Cameroon Western Highlands. Moreover, the chapters explain how power relations are characterized and socially constructed through norms, meanings and practices in the context of participation in the water development project. The chapter further explains how formal participatory arenas created for participation fall short of achieving the desired result of equitable participation.

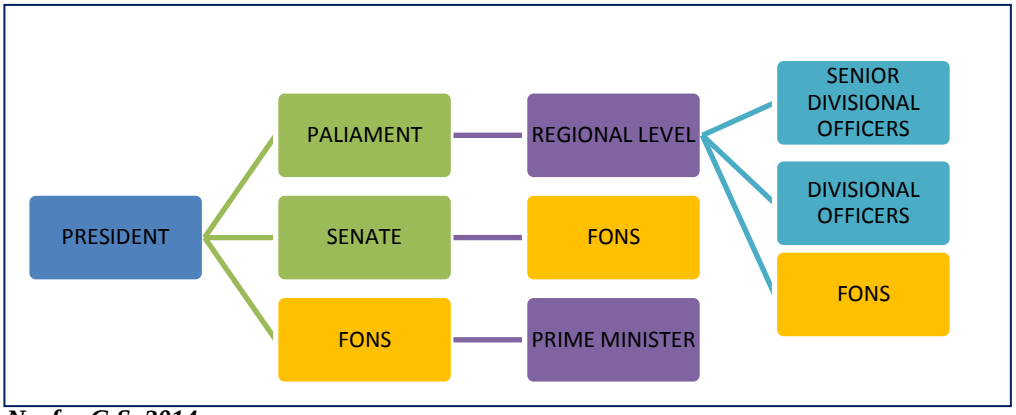
In Cameroon, local and national forms of leadership coexist. For example, the chiefdoms of the Northwest and West regions form states within a state, with fons sharing powers with government officials. Some chiefs served as rallying points for opposition groups during the political crises of the 1990s (Fokwang, 2003).

There is a high degree of social inequality. Grassfielders (The North West region), Bamiléké and Bamoun (Western region) the traditional social organization (See figure below) include hierarchical relations between members of groups with different status (royalty, nobility, commoners, and slaves). Other ethnic groups have a more egalitarian social organization in

which age and gender are the major factors in social stratification. New forms of social inequality based on access to political power and level of formal education coexist with indigenous forms of stratification. This class represents what will be termed in this study as the elites and chieftaincy of any one region. Although a cosmopolitan lifestyle has developed among the wealthy and the intelligentsia, markers of cultural distinctiveness and obligation to kin and ethnic compatriots remain. This has a strong link with basic communities as noted in the conception of water supplies as most of the projects are conceived by those of a particular area who in most cases speak the same language and thus sharing a common heritage.

Following the state picture, *Fons* figure somewhere below after Divisional Officers. Meanwhile, following our personal views will situate them at all levels as illustrated in figure 22. This we will illustrate in subsequent chapters where some chiefs in addition to their traditional titles have achieved state titles like mayors and political party national vice president. This is to say they communicate directly with the president of the Republic. The problem then is to situate chiefs in a particular level of the hierarchy. The sketches below (figures 21, 22 and 23) try to show how difficult it is to place chiefs as they have created links at different scales of government that disturb regional and national classifications.

Figure 21: If chiefs were to be classified by the Cameroonian state, they will be placed under Divisional Officers (sous préfet). But based on the influence they have in Cameroon their roles cut across the different levels (national, regional and local)

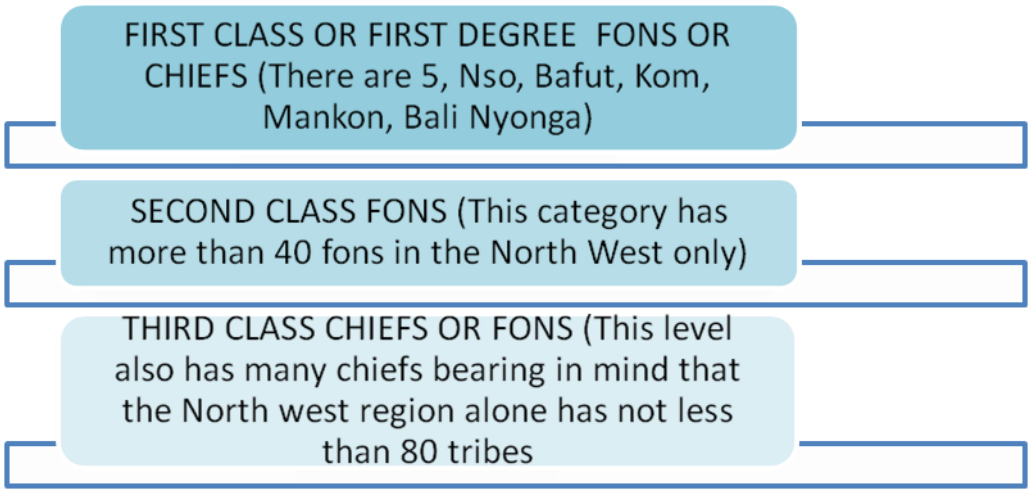


Ngefor G.S, 2014

The North West and South West regions are divided into two cultural regions. The Grassfields peoples of the Northwest region consist of nearly one hundred chiefdoms each ruled by a divine king **(prominently known as *fon*)**. Most of these chiefdoms have patrilineal or dual descent kinship systems, although some groups are matrilineal. Polygamy and fertility are important cultural values, although this varies by wealth and education. The social

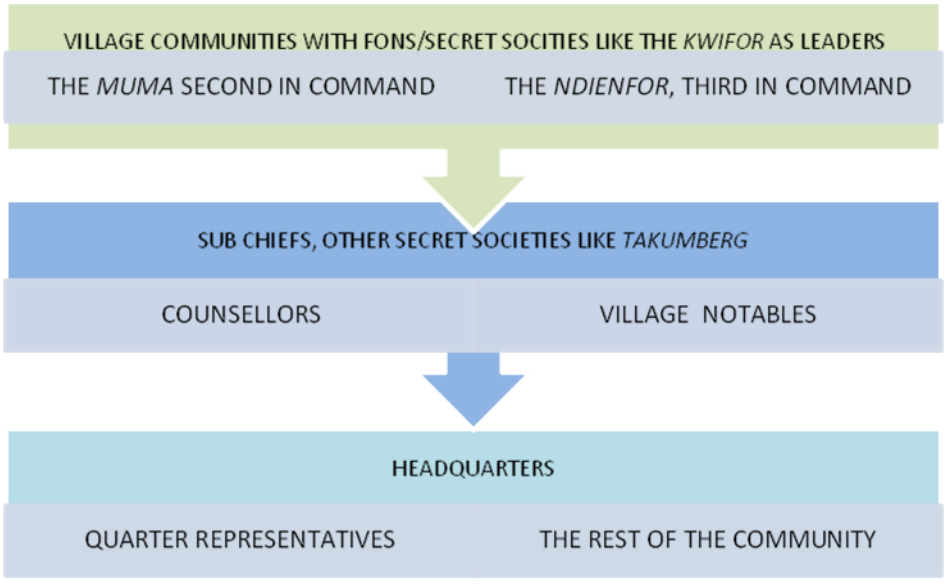
organization and culture of the Grassfielders are closely related to those of the French-speaking Bamiléké peoples of the western region. Like the Bamiléké, Grassfielders often are in opposition to the central government.

Figure 22: The classification of chiefs by the government



Ngefor G.S, 2014

Figure 23: Using the Bafut village community to show how North West chiefdoms are organized



Ngefor G.S, 2014

The peoples of the southwest region have less hierarchical systems of governance and social organization. The British appointed warrant chiefs to aid their colonial rule, and in many instances the population rallied behind those chiefs in the postcolonial period. The peoples of the southwest province include the Bakweri, who live along the slopes of Mount Cameroon.

Before we analyze the chieftaincy notion, we deem it necessary to identify other words we will be imploring constantly all of which denoting a particular setting; the village community. The Western Highlands has many small communities which have the same culture, language, identity, and tradition with divine persons at their head as leaders. These divine rulers commonly called chiefs are popularly known as *fons* in North West Cameroon and the area under their control *fondoms*[46]. The terms village, community, *fondoms*, chiefdoms will be referring to one or many of these spaces.

4.3.1 Power dynamics: Chieftaincy and accountability

Theorizing democracy and accountability in Cameroon and the Western Highlands in particular in local development, ought to emphasize on the chieftaincy arena. Within the context of this study, chieftaincy will be considered as intermediary communities between the individual and the state, and to the agency of chiefs and chiefdoms as individuals and cultural communities seeking "rights and might" both as citizens and subjects in the coercive illusion that often passes "from modern nation state" (Nyamnjoh 2003). The role of traditional structures varies depending on the degree of integration and their status. In countries where traditional communities are a small minority, it must primarily protect the cultural rights and the economic base of these traditional communities. Traditional and indigenous communities are often discriminated against by the state, and fighting to preserve their own culture. The Cameroonian communities are good examples of this. In some parts of Cameroon, some indigenous communities are endangered because of their lack of control over the management of natural resources, which threatens to destroy the economic base of their livelihoods. Often, cultural rights of these communities are barely recognized but are ignored.

[46] We wish to emphasize on the fact that during the British era, with the "policy of indirect rule" the British "created" chiefs in the South West Region to act as intermediaries. According to the North westerners the chiefs of the South West region are not divine chiefs (not having royal blood) and should not be mistaken for those in the North West. For this reason North Westerners prefer the local name for chiefs which they believe makes the differences. For this reason generally in the North West the word Chief is used to refer to those under the fon in every given community as illustrated in the figure below. The Westerners have this same problem of classification and they talk of "Royaume" (Kingdoms) referring to fons (paramount fons) and chef.

In general, chiefs and chieftaincy instead of being pushed to a position of impoverished relics of a glorious past have been functioning as auxiliaries or administrative extensions of many post colonial governments and as "vote banks/ brokers" for politician keen on cashing in on the imagined or real status of chiefs as the true representatives of their people. Although the presumed representability and accountability of chiefs to their population have been questioned, this does seem to affect the political importance of chieftaincy in a significant way. A growing number of researchers recognize chieftaincy as a force to reckon with in contemporary politics in Africa as a whole with increasing claims of recognition and representation by cultural and ethnic communities (Geschiere, 1993). Whether or not a colonial creation, chieftaincy as a political and cultural maker is to be studied, not dismissed especially in the Western Highlands of Cameroon where it is seemingly impossible to surmount them. Nyamnjoh after his study of the Cameroonian society concluded that "*African societies are far from giving up chieftaincy or turning it into completely modern institutions*" (Nyamnjoh, 2003:39).

If we consider chiefs as agents and chieftaincy as dynamic institutions, we are likely to be more patient towards ongoing processes of negotiation, accommodation and conviviality between communities… (Fokwang, 2003). In this light, in Cameroon societies and the Western Highlands in particular, efforts should be directed towards marrying tradition and modernity, ethnicity and statehood, subjection and citizenship, might and right. Cameroon being a country with more than 250 ethnic groups attempts at domesticating exogenous induced notions of democracy and accountability seemed partly understood by formally integrating chiefs as auxiliaries of the government.

4.3.2 How Legitimate is Chieftaincy in Cameroon

Traditional forms of authority differ from those of the modern state because modern leaders are usually "elected" or appointed by elected officials, while traditional leaders are usually appointed by succession or companies. Traditional leaders are not subject to an electoral process, although some are subject to the accountability or downward accountability mechanisms. There is little doubt that most of the present ambiguity and ambivalence towards the local authorities in the Western Highlands and Cameroon at large were created during colonialism. In the North West region for example were powerful chiefdoms date back over 400 years, chiefs were usually co-opted as individuals (the German then the British colonial

authorities), disregarding the body of councilors that governed with them. The customary policy-making process was often lost as chiefs took their lead more from the colonial administrative officers than from their indigenous "political elite" (Olivier De Sardan, 1998, Biershenk et al, 2000).

Modern state and traditional authorities have different sources of legitimacy. For traditional authorities, legitimacy has its foundation in the history and culture, often associated with divine or sacred religious references /. The legitimacy of the leaders of modern societies is based on elections and is sealed in procedures and constitutional and legal rules.

The functions of traditional leaders have been constantly revised to adapt to new situations, the fact that the social and economic organization of society has changed particularly in the last century. Traditional leaders in many parts of Cameroon are able to adapt to various changes and external political pressures and maintained their position in society. There are many examples where traditional leaders have adapted to new functions. In some cases, they have become involved in activities within the modern state, such as modern education, the provision of basic services and infrastructure provision. More recently, it is clear that traditional leaders have regained importance, not only because development agencies seeking potential partners at the local level, but also because many central governments recognize their important role in local governance. This situation still prevails in traditional societies today and is quite visible in the management of local development projects where chiefs and other allies intelligently play one interest group against the other as circumstances and personal interest dictate.

It is evident that the chieftaincy reforms carried out by the French were adopted with very little alteration by the one party post colonial state. The various chiefs were only seen as useful if they could serve as effective instruments for the implementation of government policies amongst their people.

In this light, the government took a series of moves to ensure the attainment of its objectives. This included an invitation in 1966 for chiefs to rally round the unified party; the establishment of criteria for the award of a "Certificate of Official Recognition by the government" in 1967; a presidential warning in 1969 to all chiefs who were seen to be reluctant to change; the abolition of the house of chiefs in 1972, and a decree in 1977 defining

the role of chiefs within the new nation- state. While the pre colonial autonomy of ethnic communities was not restored, chiefs were defined and treated as auxiliaries of the government answerable to district and regional state administrative officers. This enables the central government to manipulate chiefs as vote banks/brokers (Nyamnjoh, 2003; De Sardan, 1998) without having to credit them with effective power and active participation in decision making at local and national levels.

At the eve of re-emergence of multi partyism in the 1990s, the idea of nation-building and national unity meant made many various ethnic groups to think that their loyalties and interests will be suppressed a situation that forced them to adjust their relationship with the a highly centralized government and increasing their dependence (figures 22, 23, 24). For the same reason, cultural communities or chiefdoms felt increasingly sidestepped and powerless. In the 1990s however multipartism forced the chiefs to make more open political engagements, by enhancing their regional and national positions prominence (Fokwang, 2003, 2005). In this light, instead of suppressing chieftaincy in Cameroon, ethnic elite associations proliferate in the corridors of power and resources seeking political and economic recognition and claiming representation for their region or people as cultural units (Page, 2009).

In Cameroon, we also observe significant differences between regions and within regions as regards the extent to which people are attached to structures, traditional values and norms, or the modern state in their daily lives, and as compared to the degree of influence of one or the other form of authority. Chieftaincy in Cameroon survives and continues to influence ongoing processes. In some areas, the degree of people's attachment to traditional structures depends largely on the level of urbanization. In urban areas, people are more likely to be influenced by structures, Western values and standards in rural areas where the attachment to traditional structures is likely to be stronger. However, even in highly urbanized areas, we find many people still very attached to the traditional world. It has thus imposed an adaptability atmosphere as they cannot be easily sidestepped. Above all the consequences of this interdependency relations and continues power struggle falls on the local communities who are deprived of their basic rights (decision-making, equity) as they are out of the arena. Subsequently, communities develop counter reactions which they manifest by resistances towards the participation in local development projects (cf Fokwang, 2003, Page, 2003, 2005). For co operation to prevail in the local arena the right equilibrium must be selected and this requires the establishment of the appropriate kinds of beliefs and expectations on the part of the different actors. What Bond (2001) calls the "good equilibrium".

4.4 The community notion as a source of identity in the Western Highlands

All along in chapter 3 we discussed the governance concept in relation to the Cameroon water context. We came to the conclusion that the inefficiency of the water governance structure in Cameroon is due to the fragmented institutional and jurisdictional systems. After analyzing the concept of community we put forward that communities are very heterogeneous in nature. In this subsection, we will be observing both concepts with reference to the Cameroon Western Highlands. The assumption we will be analyzing in the rest of this chapter is that:

Water governance in Cameroon has two main challenges. On the one hand, institutional and judicial challenges act like obstacles as they do not correspond to local realities. On the other hand, the heterogeneity of the Western Highlands hinders water governance strategies. In this light, there is need to understand these communities diversity through village associations, inter-tribal wars (appendix 6, 7 and 8) and their organization.

The use of the term association in this study can be a cause of confusion as it describes two separate situations which are both apparent in the management of community water supplies. There is need thus for clarification. The term association can be attributed to user associations which can be defined as an autonomous water institution set up to manage a given water supply. We already made mention of user associations (part I) as one of the many hybrids of the community model. On the other hand, we have Village Development Associations (VDAs) made up of members of communities or villages who greatly partake in the village's development as is the case of Kumbo and Bali (The Nso Cultural and Development Association; NSODA and the Bali Development and Cultural Association; BANDECA respectively).

For the past thirty years, village development associations that bring together members of the same village, geographic origin, speaking the same language (see figure pertaining to the Cameroonian communities) or ethnic group are on the rise both locally, nationally and even transnationally. These associations serve as a sort of attachment /identity/, prestige where members and especially external members (leaving outside the village in most cases in larger towns and internationally) come together to participate in cultural activities from outside the village.

This section takes as its central problematic an investigation of the nature and structure of the linkages between urban elites and their areas of origin or home villages and consequently the

relationship between these groups and village development. Development theory in the 1960s and 1970s argued that the emergence of urbanized elite would subvert the primary loyalty they owed to their areas of origin. In the case of the Western Highlands these ties can be understood through Village Associations created outside the village. It's necessary to emphasis the impact of these associations within this study to show the relationship between community organizations and development of local water supplies. In this light, development literature shows many cases of communal efforts wherein the economy based on affection in which both town dwellers and villagers are held together in webs of kinship and tribal obligation. They contribute inordinately to basic survival, social maintenance and development projects (Hyden, 1983).

This subsection thus sets out to analyze the evolution and activities of some communities in local development endeavours within the Grasslands of Cameroon. In addition, it also seeks to determine the ability of these communities to provide collective security through self-reliant efforts. The uniformity of the human and economic landscape of the North West and western regions can still be detected and prompted us to investigate on this additional common point between these communities as concerns their social organization.

The analysis is therefore based primarily on findings from interviews with members of Village Development Associations (VDAs) and traditional councils conducted in Kumbo and Bali in the North West region and Bafou in the western region (francophone). This is augmented with a review of other data from Nkwen and Bafou on self-reliant efforts and beyond which are incorporated for a comparative analysis.

The choice of these villages is guided by my previous work, my master's thesis which was carried out in Nkwen. These villages have shown a successful mobilization of local resources through the creation of local autonomous structures that liaise with other village development associations outside the village. The assumption we put forward is that the elites' role is a strong determinant in the success and follow up of projects in these villages. In addition to all these factors, these villages are located in administrative divisions of the area; they share common locally realized projects and the different VDAs were created at different times.

The concept of self-reliance is one of the basic alternatives for effective community development in Cameroon. It has its roots can be traced far back in the colonial and even pre-colonial period in the construction bridges and the chief's palace for example.

The concept of self-reliance is very important within the discourse of community development and is closely related concepts like mutual-help, self-help, indigenous participation and rural development. All of the above appellations advocate the need for people to improve their conditions with local initiatives and resources within their reach. This concept is gaining importance as a new formula for community development even though it can be traced back in Anglophone Cameroon as the British development formula.

We could also add that this widespread adoption can also be closely related to the lack of confidence in the state or state withdrawal through privatization recently. This explains the emerging trend in community development, which sees it as an important point of take-off for better living. It emphasizes on the integration of people in development programmes for them to gain skills that can enable them to manage their everyday problems more successfully. Self-reliance is thus "*development on the basis of a country's (region's) own resources, involving its populations based on the potentials of its cultural values and traditions*" (Galtung 1980). Communities and individual people define their own development according to their own needs, values and aspirations. In the different case studies, the communities have contributed to developing their infrastructure and social services. Thus self-reliance is applying community, knowledge, skills and resources at their disposal in community development. This ties the view that social learning and people's behaviour can enable them to satisfy their basic needs, to develop self-reliant, and to minimize precarious dependence on agencies external to their communities. The self-help approach encourages sharing and community participation at all levels of the project, a tendency that is noticeable in the communities under study (Anyanwu 1992).

In Cameroon, Yenshu (1997) holds that prior to independence in 1960 community development in both the British and French Cameroon were different even in appellation; "community development" and "action communautaire" respectively. Setting aside the English or French appellations, all projects conceived and constructed with the community's contribution were later on managed by the Community Development Department of Public works (PWD, Public Works Department).

The traditional hierarchical institutions with the chiefs at the helm were a heritage of British colonial rule, Geschiere (1995) observed that in the adjacent part of the former French Colony - Bamileke part of the Western grassfields - such associations were relatively strong as well. Chiefs are still at the centre of an elaborate set of more or less esoteric associations around their courts. He further notes that in the diaspora, migrants from the same chiefdom created pseudo-traditional associations in order to foster cooperation in their new surroundings and retain the link with their chief.

It is there not surprising that community projects (VCPs) conceived and realized through popular participation are common, relatively well managed, and successful in this part of Cameroon. In this part of Cameroon then community-conceived projects have produced better results to contemporary modes of translating bureaucratic ideas into meaningful development at least in this focus area. Village development associations in the Western Highlands have "democratic" structures with executive boards that work in collaboration with committees and subcommittees depending on the type of the project. It is worth noting that meetings congresses and mini-congresses are organized annually check the accounts of ongoing projects and funds are requested for further projects.

During such grand fora, sketches, traditional dishes, dances, exhibitions and contributions collected from the different branches represented throughout the national territory and presented to the congress by representatives of branches or branch presidents. This is how many Village Development Associations operate (VDAs) in the region that have very vibrant branches in major cities of the country. Fundraising is also done at all stages; local, national and international. Members set levies for other development projects at hand and the elites conserve their prestige by contributing generously. Fund raising fora can also through the organization of traditional dances. This is the case of the Bali Cultural and Development association (BANDECA) and Nso Development and Cultural association (NSODA).

In Nso' whose capital, Kimbo or Kumbo, is known throughout the country as "Baghdad" because of its tough opposition politics, identity and power have increasingly come to be centred on the *Fon*, the palace and "traditional" institutions of government (Njoh, 2009). Here "traditional" and "modern" or "inside" and "outside" are very present, shifting and sometimes elusive positions in a struggle for influence and success within the polity rather than signify historical stages of development. Power and identity for Nso' people come from the ability to

combine a variety of statuses, achievements and forms of wealth. However, to achieve true power and recognition, one must assume a local persona, which includes connections with the *Fon* and the palace.

This is as true for elites living outside the chiefdom as it is for those at home. Hence one sees a re-creation of Nso in the homes and social lives of Nso' elites in Bamenda, Yaounde, Douala and other urban centres. Living rooms are decorated with Nso' art, symbols and carvings; the *Fon's* picture is prominently displayed, and on the living room walls of most Nso' expatriates hang a raffia bag and a sheathed cutlass, often covered with cowries, signifying membership in manjong, the warriors' society. Most urban dwellers belong to Nso' mfu[47] or manjong houses whose officers or [a]mfoomis[48] play a significant political role in these communities. In the world outside Nso' urban elites re-create Nso' culture and institutions: they belong to Nso' njangis, frequent Nso' bars and restaurants, live in Nso' "neighbourhoods", and most commonly their children's first language is Lamnso'. Nso' urban elites maintain an identity which is deeply rooted in their region of origin. This also holds true for other villages.

With few exceptions Nso' elites living "outside" seek and are granted titles in the Nso' palace societies. The emphasis on the acquisition of traditional or neo-traditional[49]- titles cannot be explained in a functionalist way, but rather as the result of a number of historical and social processes intersecting at a historical moment within which the national centre provides neither meaning nor security to its citizens. Since the state has not succeeded in constructing a feeling of patriotism elites seek to accumulate symbolic or cultural. This capital accumulation may appear as a simple and even self-interested act, but in fact such transactions embody multiple meanings which were inherited in pre-colonial Nso' traditions, and will be inherited by their children. These meanings play off each other in a dialogic fashion where the central or core meaning of Nso' titles combines status and self aggrandizement with the spatial construction of Nso' as the political (as well as social and cultural) centre. This has a double role. It is efficient in maintaining powerful ties and interdependences between urban elites and

[47] This is the Nso group found in almost all main towns in Cameroon and even abroad where Nso natives come together on regular bases to promote their culture; pass over traditional rites, dances, and the dialect even to Nso people leaving outside the village. These structures are strongly tied to the village organisation with Fais, shu Fais, Sheys and shu sheys as they exist in the village. During their meetings issues on village development can be addressed and contributions made to support.

[48] They are those who are part of the Mfo association. It's worth noting that these associations are mostly made up of men.

[49] Some of the popular titles in Nso include, "fai", "shu-fai", "shey", "shu-shey", in Bali they talk of "Bah"

their villages of origin, and symbolic of these connections. These strong ties can be observed in individuals as well as in village associations created outside the village. These associations (both national and transnational) work with some aid agencies like NGOs.

NGO's like the Swiss Association for International Development (HELVETAS) is heralded as a partner in self-reliant development in the Cameroon grassfields. Their intervention in pipe borne water schemes, road rehabilitation and development of water catchments in collaboration with the communities is remarkable. They work with village development associations and other grassroots structures in the maintenance of pipelines, digging of trenches, supplying sand, stones and laying of pipes for distribution of water to quarters in the various localities. Water management committees which act as parts Village Development Associations are very instrumental in problems relating to distribution and maintenance of water points. In the case of Nkwen the elites constitute a strong force in community development endeavours in the grassfields as elsewhere in Cameroon. Since the game of politics is determined by the lobbying capacity of the region, its elite plays a central role in canvassing for resources from the central government. They also use existing village/community associations and committees as a political base and back up for their actions. Their support to community development initiatives is premised on the readiness of the community members to reciprocate when such illustrious sons or daughters' need to garner political support especially during elections. This "*njangi*"[50] tendency has had a negative impact on village development associations. The polarization and return favours expected by elites has creates unnecessary tension leading to the dysfunction of some Village Development Associations. These institutions have undertaken concerted efforts to satisfy the pressing needs of their communities. Priority projects nonetheless differ from one community to another. The VDAs are structured with a central coordinating body and sub-branches represented wherever members of the community are found in the country.

These VDAs operate in specific cultural contexts and the cultural setting is influential in creating an open atmosphere of support, accountability and transparency. The emergence of self-reliant development organisations in the Grassfields can be traced back to the late 1970s

[50] This term is the local term for what is known as tontine in French. It emphasizes the obligation to pay back what you owe to others. Since you must repay every member's money he contributed to you, the term "njangi" is mostly used in the Anglophone Cameroon to designate that inevitable pay back.

and early 1980s. These self-reliant organisations are elected and they work at times independently from the traditional council, the chiefs and the notables or the villagers who are usually consulted as advisers. Apparently they are autonomous, especially the transnational associations, but there still exists a hierarchy within the association in relation to royalty and nobility back home and other socio-political influences. The existence of separate executing bodies is basically to ensure efficiency in contacts, raising of funds and management of projects in a rapidly changing world. It was observed that these VDAs of the Grassfields have branches all over the country where members of their community are found. These branches have executives, who collect dues and contributions from members. They act as delegates in national executives and planning committees, thereby facilitating the task of bringing resources and ideas together.

We thought it necessary to elaborate on the part of associations in this study because we will use the term very often. The Bali water supply is managed by the Village Development Association (VDA) and we will constantly be referring to this term as the management organ. The term association then in relation to the management organ is quite different to user associations which are autonomous water management organs with specialized personnel to handle maybe part or the entire scheme.

The Bali Cultural Association (BANDECA) is not a user association in the strict term but manages the Bali water scheme alongside many other projects within the development association[51].

Cultural and development associations in Cameroon can put in place a strong mechanism for the proper monitoring and evaluation of projects they are executing in the villages, so to get a better impact of their activities. They have also been advised to design real strategic plans to ease the achievement of their development objectives. These recommendations have been made by a team of British researchers[52] who used BANDECA (Bali Nyonga Development and Cultural Association) and MECA (Manyu Elements Cultural Association) as their case study to dig into the operations of village development associations in Cameroon. We visited and took some pictures of the different management sites of the two water supplies in the North West region, Bali and Kumbo. In the case of Kumbo for example not only had it once

[51] Page B, 2006, Mortuary, Page B, 2005, Transnational, Fokwang, 2007,

[52] Page, B., Mercer, C., and Evans, M. (2009) "African transnationalisms and diaspora networks: an introduction" Global Networks, Vol. 9, No. 2, pp. 137-140

been managed by the Nso Cultural and Development Association (NSODA) but it is located in the *fon's* palace as seen in the plate 1 below.

Plate 1: The Kumbo Water Authority Office located in the Nso, *Ngefor G.S, 2013*

Plate 2: The Kumbo Water authority office situated in the Nso' palace, ***Ngefor G.S, 2013***

Plate 3 : The Bali Community Water office with a sign board of the Bali Development and Cultural Association (BANDECA). *Ngefor G.S, 2013*

This association will be elaborated in part III of this study. It greatly participates in Bali local development projects. Even though the presence of these associations can be felt in many development projects, there is still a big problem organizing this potential source of income and resource. Ben Page expresses his opinion concerning the role of transnational associations with the following words

"At the moment, there is no systematic evaluation that is trying to make the work more professional (national and transnational associations participation in local development) and learning from mistakes and sharing good practice".
This research, carried out in 2005 by Ben Page with Claire Mercer and Martin Evans as co-researchers shows how Cameroonians abroad can contribute to the development of their country and recommends the formation of larger associations to cover areas that are falling behind in terms of development or have no associations. The research titled "Development and the Diaspora; Hometown Associations in Cameroon and Tanzania"

In this work they found that, there are a lot of individual remittances- people sending money home to the village. However they note that, the challenge is how to convert those remittances into public good such as water supplies, health facilities etc so that they are useful for everybody in the village. They found that cultural and development associations could be good vehicles for taking money from people overseas and converting into welfare facilities.

Dr Page who presented this work in Cameroon noted that, data collection for the research was quite easy because "people like talking about their hometowns". Home town associations are real sources of identity and villages in Cameroon serve as sources of attachment which individuals like to cling to. They are also very ready to protect their villages, in terms of their culture, the language and the territory/resources which in most cases are the water and land resources. This at times is at the bases of many inter tribal wars that leave visible traits between village communities. We took the case of Nkwen (the case we studied in my masters thesis) and Bambili to illustrate how far villages can go to protect their patrimony. This strong zeal to protect the culture can also be seen in the case of the Bali-Bawock intertribal (appendix 6) war we will be present in the section below.

4.4.1 Persistent intertribal wars: A constrain to water governance

The causes of boundary disputes between Bambili and Nkwen can be examined under social and political perspectives. Politically, the two neighbours believed in expansionist tendencies. At one time, intertribal wars were used to subjugate neighbours although without much success. For instance, the Bambili-Nkwen dispute. The scarcity of land to the Bambili people can be attributed to the government's development policy in the area since 1960s with the creation of the Cameroon College of Arts Sciences and Technology (CCAST) in 1963 which took considerable hectares of land. Followed by the Ecole Normale Supérieure (ENS), the regional School of agriculture, School of Health Science (CUSS) and the Gendamerie brigade. All these took up Bambili land and the only way for Bambili people to survive was to expand at the expense of their neighbours. In an attempt to expand and conquer their neighbours, the Bambili clashed with the Nkwen in the East and Babanki Tugoh in the West. It's interesting to note that Bambili was defeated on several occasions since the 18th century and was forced to pay tribute to Babanki Tungoh.

Being a very small community (smaller in size than its neighbours) Bambili tries to apply strategies to defend their boundaries and even invade those of its neighbours. On January 26th 1993, Bambili people blocked the road leading to Kumbo via Ndop and from Bamenda through Banja to Babanki and attacked the Babanki people. This strategy according to the Babankis was because most of them had gone to their annual traditional festival ("*kebenkendong*"). They were still defeated with many people wounded and houses burned down.

The reflection underlying this narrative is the fact that there exist many intertribal wars in Cameroon due to the ethnic diversity (more than 250 ethinc groups) and recent strategies aimed at by villages are water sources, destruction of catchment areas and treats to poison water tanks. Between 1993 and 1995, we witnessed the intertribal war that took place between Nkwen and Bambili. Even though then it seemed like a simple tension between these two villages the Bambili people had threatened to poison the Nkwen water supply at the water purification station situated some 8-10km from the Nkwen palace. This generalized atmosphere of tension started on a parcel of land at the Nkwen-Bambili borders belonging to Nkwen. Bambili which is noted to be particular provocative attacked and destroyed the crops of the owners of that parcel of land. In less than a month a second incident followed where a man (a native of Nkwen) was slaughtered still by the Bambili people on the same parcel of

land. The Nkwen people reacted by attacking and burning down and killing people in Bambili. Our analyses made us to understand that the Bambili people hesitated to follow their strategy which was actually to poison the water source this time situated not in Nkwen but in a neighbouring village (Banja) south east of Nkwen.

The main problem for the Bambili people was that poisoning the water source in Banja meant entering Banja and indirectly attacking the Banja people. The difficulty then was that the Bambili people should be ready to fight on two fronts because it is obvious the source is found in Banja but serves the Nkwen people who are ready at all cost to protect that source. The source they got after the failure of the SCANWATER project where the wells became salty and undrinkable. It's worth mentioning that before the Nkwen people were granted the permission to exploit that source located in Banja the two *fons* (Nkwen and Banja) had reached an agreement with the *fon* of Nkwen's official visit to Banja.

This narrative might at first sight seem unnecessary but the reflection we are defending is that- it is virtually impossible to implement universal policies in regions infested with much disparities. If we take for example the fact that there exist as many water schemes in the North West region as the villages, then we ask if it will not be easier to reduce the number of autonomous schemes by bringing together villages and creating fewer and more solid schemes. It will be easier to create more formal institutions to manage fewer water schemes rather than every village conceiving realizing and managing its own scheme with many if not all of them facing serious difficulties and some even bankrupt.

The answer to the above question is that it is virtually impossible to reduce the number of water schemes in the North West for example. There exist an atmosphere of mistrust and thus every village wants to have its own water supply which permits it to have a degree of autonomy. This problem can be partly justified by the state's classification of chiefdoms or *fondoms* into three different categories (figure 23). All chiefs claim they are divine and have royal blood and that all of them are equal. This administrative classification of chiefs according to degrees (First class, second class and third degree chiefs) only complicates the idea of creating fewer water projects. This classification in the North West region for example identifies only 5 first class chiefs; Nso, Bafut, Bali, Mankon and Kom. Merging thus a first class chiefdom with a second class or third class chiefdom immediately means the overt

domination of the first class chiefs over the others, a situation which cannot be accepted by the would be dominated population.

This situation can be better understood after analyzing the power struggle that exists between chiefs. In the next paragraphs we will use the North West Fons' Union to back up our view that although the Western Highlands seem to be a homogenous entity (physical and social wise) there exist much disparities which can counter national governance efforts (Here we reduce the definition of governance to the application of uniform/homogenous development plans to the entire country).

In this section of our analysis we will be bringing in the atmosphere that actually exists between North West fons. This analysis is to back up two points:
Firstly that communities and more precisely the North West region for example is a territory of disintegrated entities rather than the united unit we get at first sight. Secondly we used the power struggles that had been existing among the North West chiefs to ease our understanding of the theory on chieftaincy.

Power struggle between fons became visible in the mid 1980s when because of greed some Fons decided to crown the president of Cameroon the "fon of fons". This era of one party system anybody who seeked favour in the eyes of the ruling regime had to join the ruling party, the CPDM. First degree fons (Bali Nyonga, Fon of Nso, Fon of Kom, Mankon, and Bafut) to their greatest dismay were barred from being part of the ruling regime by its chairman; Paul Biya. Most of the fons took this as a betrayal.

In May 1990 the SDF (Social Democratic Front) was launched in Bamenda. In the heat of the SDF launch Paul Biya convened a congress of his party in June 1990. Surprisingly many fons who were barred in 1985 were co-opted into the Central committee. Angwafor III of Mankon gained the post of vice president. Fon Abumbi II of Bafut and Fon Doh Ganyonga of Bali Nyonga also had positions. The envious positions occupied by these three chiefs drew the attention of their peers. They started scheming and competing overtly to draw the attention of the regime (CPDM). Many abominable acts were committed by fons in this process, open killing by fon Doh Gah of Bali Kumbat because they never helped him win the elections in his region. Fon Angwafor was seen in public holding an umbrella over Governor Bell Luc's

head- an abomination. The Bamenda population rose up in anger and shot Fon Angwafor with rotten tomatoes and burnt his palace.

One of the most degrading moments in the history of traditional rulers in the North West was during the reign of Achidi Achu as prime minister (April 1992 to September 1996). Achidi Achu used his position and money to bribe, cajole and divide the *fons* for his political interest. As illustrated in the preceding chapter the late 1980 and early 1990s was decisive for North West fons. They had to play the double role of pleasing both the sate and their village community. In 1994, the North West *Fons'* Association (NOWEFA) was created to restore the dignity of the traditional "institution".

NOWEFA was created to call the *fons'* attention to the fact that they were being used by the ruling regime on the detriment of their people. At that moment since there was still hope for power to change (to the opposition) there will come a time were they (the *fons*) will neither be with the new regime (the opposition, SDF) nor with their people. With the creation of NOWEFA, Fon Fusi Yakum Ntaw was elected president. To Achiri Achu, a strong fon's association was not of interest to him, as a result, he created a rival association, the North West *Fons'* Conference (NOWEFCO). It was launched in the Bamenda Skyline Hotel. This was the first time in history that fons meeting took place in an hotel instead of a palace. The launching of NOWEFCO was in sharp contrast with the low level launching of NOWEFA. With the *fon* of Bali Kumbat (*Fon* Doh Gah Gwanyin) as its president NOWEFCO was provided on permanent bases "ammunition" to fight NOWEFA.

Under Achidi Achu's reign as prime minister, *Fon* Doh Gah of Bali Kumbat became a political hero greatly envied by his fellow comrades. With the creation of NOWEFCO, one could make out that the motto was "down with the so-called big five fondoms". Rumours went that the state made promises to reclassify, an affair that tempted the second class and third class chiefs to be captured/manipulated. Meanwhile chiefs like *Fon* Doh Gah of Bali Kumbat some sort of mocked at the first class chiefs because he had a more comfortable political position even though his is not a first class chief. After tasting power, *Fon* Doh Gah did everything possible to stay in the corridors of power. In January 1996, he rigged legislative elections in Bali Kumbat. Meanwhile Achidi Achu never succeeded to be elected in his Santa constituency; nevertheless NOWEFCO prevented him from falling to ground level. This humiliating situation was not only suffered by Achidi Achu but by most of the first

class chiefs who went in for elections in their regions. In September 1996 Achiri Achu was sacked and Peter Mafany Musonge was appointed. In May 1997, the CPDM that won all the 20 parliamentary seats thanks to the SDF boycott lost 19 of seats. *Fon* Doh won the lone seat for the ruling CPDM Party. He was then a political god.

It should be noted that *Fon* Doh was protected by Achidi Achu who was not still prime minister, he needed thus to consolidate his position and look for ways to sustain the association financially. It seems the regime appreciated his efforts by the fact that he was awarded many contracts or to the "royal enterprise" headed by the fon or better still belonging to the fon. The Fon was unaware of the fact that Achidi Achu his mentor of yesterday was uncomfortable with him. Fon Doh's rise and dominating position in the Northwest only deepened the hatred other fons who had been unsuccessful in the political mafia. He was considered as an outsider. Fon Doh and his NOWEFCO caused serious damage to NOWEFA and it never succeeded to consolidate the fons as intended.

- **The birth of NOWEFU (North West Fons' Union), conflicts and community heterogeneity through chiefs**

The years ahead were that of backbiting, rivalry and hatred amongst the traditional leaders. Meanwhile *Fon* Doh was now a mayor and member of the parliament. While some *fons* admired *Fon* Doh and rallied behind him to pick crumbs that dropped others grew more jealous. Moreover he had lost his virtues, he became a tyrant and a dictator. This created misunderstanding within NOWEFCO. *Fon* Chafah, young magistrate and *Fon* Forbuzie, a professional teacher could not bear it anymore. They spearheaded a coup against their president (president of NOWEFCO, *Fon* Doh). A new movement advocating the unity of the *fons* was born. At that moment enemies of yesterday came together because of their collective hatred for *Fon* Doh. This new movement was strongly supported by some North West elites. Their action can be backed by the fact that the centralized powers in the hands of *Fon* Doh left very little crumbs for the others.

On 30th May 1998, *fons* from the rival faction gathered at the f*ons* palace. Both NOWFCO and NOWEFA were "dissolved" and the North West f*ons* Union (NOWEFU) was created. The *fons* claimed that after years of division the traditional rulers had now found reason and have decided to bury the past. An executive was elected with *Fon* Abumbi II of Bafut as

chairman and *fon* Chafah Isaac as Secretary General. *Fon* Doh boycotted claiming that the *fons* never had the right to dissolve NOWEFCO. What followed was a battle for legitimacy and supremacy. A delegation of NOWEFU rushed to Yaounde (the capital of Cameroon) to lobby for support. They were very poorly received as *fon* Doh had used his connections in Yaounde. As the lone CPDM Member of Parliament he was given a receptive ear.

The then prime minster received the NOWEFU members very poorly and the images were never to feature on the national TV. The Prime minister was instructed not to roll the red carpet for the NOWEFU delegation. *Fon* Angwafor of Mankon vice president of CPDM was snubbed by the Prime minister, the old Fon and a first class fon had to humble himself before *fon* Doh back in the North West. *Fon* Doh summoned a NOWEFCO meeting, meanwhile NOWEFU members swore to disrupt. The then Governor of the North West, Fai Yengo Francis instructed all SDOs not to travel to attend the meeting. Meanwhile, the members of NOWEFU ordered *fon* Doh to take his meeting to another division, and not in Mezam. Everything that had to do with NOWEFCo was not to take place in Mezam division. The question is how could educated fons with lawyers among them lost sight of the fact that only administrative authorities are empowered to ban meetings. Secondly it had not dawned to them that Yaounde is not interested in the unity of North West *fons*. Further still *Fon* Doh's meeting came to take place in Mezam division and sometime after the Governor of North West was replaced. This only proved that *fon* Doh's roots as a national political figure had been confirmed and you better be careful when dealing with him. The above narrative has three objectives:

Firstly, highlight an understanding of the Western Highland communities. All through our analysis one can readily think that if *fons* are influential in their regions rather than setting them aside they can be used to promote development or better still governance. From the above narrative we are far from thinking that *fons* can act as instruments if yes for their egoistic reasons. Not only does it counters the community rhetoric which considers communities as homogenous entities but also poses the problem of the application/adoption of extensive projects with homogenous rules. Till date rivalry between *fons* still exists, but what draws our attention is that such development plans needs to integrate communities which have lost faith both in the national as well as local leaders.

We share the idea that rules are better to be adopted from the grassroots. A first step should be bringing together the many water projects and creating management institutions if possible. Elaborating on this section is using one aspect of the complexity of the Cameroonian societies to explain the difficulty of creating well structured water organs. Experience has shown that due to the history of these societies, there had always existed an atmosphere of mistrust and these communities can never agree.

Concretely on the field a Nkwen native is skeptical sharing a common “plate” or “cup” with a Bambili native for fear of being poisoned. The amazing aspect of this situation is that in Nkwen for example during my master’s studies I carried out two visits at the catchment area but was surprised that I could not clearly make out the demarcation of this site. When asked why, I was informed of the Bambili/ Nkwen incident and I recalled that after the threat from the Bambili people Nkwen decided to hide the exact spot of the sedimentation plant. This process went on for more than three years watching over the trees planted all over the catchment area and men of Nkwen were mobilized to watch over the sedimentation plant until the trees had grown enough to hide the spot. My mom lost her cousin in this process who was appointed as was the routine to stay on the watch and he was attacked and killed by the Bambili people. This three years period was declared as a period of moaning with specific restrictions like no excessive drinking, no playing of musical instruments and in general no festive activity. This situation is not peculiar only between the Nkwen and Bambili.

This and other examples are not to divert our attention from our main focus but rather to guide readers so they understand our analyses and the degree of complexity of our societies which are rather viewed superficially by analyst while proposing development strategies. With the above analyses that emphasize on intercommunity disagreements one can think if we take the case of a village all is well. There also exists many points of disaccord within villages as we seek to analyze in the next section.

4.4.2 Divergent Community interest and possibility of common projects

We need not emphasize any longer on the supreme powers of the fon in his village. There exists many aspects to show the fon's authority within his village and even nationally. Cameroonian chiefdoms are dynamic entities where activities like the village annual dance and other cultural activities do take place. Villages actually existed like autonomous bodies

before the arrival of the colonial powers. Many of these activities still exist till date, in Bali for example there is an annual dance known as "lela", in Bafut, Nkwen and Mankon speaking the common ngemba[53] (figure 24) dialect call theirs "abenenfor" in Babanki Tungoh as "kebenkendong".

Figure 24: Some chiefdoms in the Mezam division (North west Region)

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Bringing in the cultural diversity to act as a constructive idea in North West and Western regions is at the same time to show the participation of the local associations but also to show how it can be a hindrance to national projects. We argue that the failure of local water projects in the Western Highlands is largely based on the poor governance framework and it is due to the cultural/community diversity in Cameroon. The Cameroonian state meets many difficulties in issuing widely accepted laws and policies. There exists an identity awareness

[53] The "ngemba" is the common dialect spoken by more than 10 villages in the North west region of Cameroon. Some of the villages include Bafut, Mankon, Nkwen, Bamendakwe,Santa, Akum, Awing, Mbatu and Chamber.

which is also playing negatively in dislocation and disintegrating the society from reaching common objectives beyond villages. We observe that the heterogeneous nature of the villages can lead to a decline in the state in general; this is underlined by the spontaneous and conservatory nature of homestead associations. We are convinced that disagreements within villages or projects hinder the amalgamation of water project territories which owe much to resistance from more restricted local (identities) and conflicting interests that tend to encourage many mini fragmented (management) schemes.

If the North West *Fons'* Association (*NOWEFO)*[54] has failed in its pan-regional bid to serve as a rallying point for a regional consciousness movement in the same manner as the Bali and Kumbo hegemonic ambitions of the early 1990s, the political gains have been considerable. The chiefs of Bali Nyonga, Bali Kumbat and Mankon have succeeded in clinching a sizeable share of government positions and in maintaining themselves in strategic positions out of their support for the regime and in disproportion to their demographic weight, thereby emerging as important actors in the power game.

These crises inevitably lead to competition for prestige and position between communities that have characterized intercommunity relations during the colonial and postcolonial period within the area. While most of the land disputes in the North West were due to the expansionist policies used by village leaders to subdue their neighbours, these conflicts were intensified by the many disruptive boundary redefinitions by the Germans and British. But while the British made a serious attempt to resolve these disputes, the Government of Cameroon has failed to follow through. Because of this failure villages decide to revisit previous boundaries for political, economic and social reasons. Solutions to these disputes can only be reached if Government decides in good faith, and using meaningful dialogue, to examine the socio economic plight of the people.

The above section evaluates the intercommunity relations that result and act as a barrier to the state to attempt to create a single administrative unit out of people who had formed separate entities but who entertained various relations between themselves. We have attempted to

[54] The North West *Fons*' association which as a result of the conflicting political interests of the members was dissolved and replaced by. We will expantiate on this aspect when analyzing how politics affected water management in Bali Nyonga.

prove that the politics of identity fluctuate from co-operation within these communities through associations for example and to conflict when differences are more apparent between communities[55]. The latter situation largely plays a negative role in the putting in place of common water schemes and managers due to the nonfunctioning administrative arrangements. It is obvious it is relative easier to place fewer projects under well specialized institutions than try to supervise 1000 projects.

One of the basic arguments that I attempted to make is that this fluctuation between assertions of similarity and difference between communities respectively are the result of the processes of social formation, which characterized the Grassfields since the pre-colonial period. In order to understand the degree of division that exist in the Western Highlands through its people (tribes and languages) we will bring in the case of the Ngemba. The area under study was inhabited in the majority by peoples speaking a group of inter-intelligible languages classified as Ngemba (a term coined in the colonial period from the local expression for "that is to say", which is common to these groups). The chiefdoms of Bafut, Bambili, Bambui, Nkwen, Mundum and Mendankwe all speak languages which fall into this category, which is a subgroup of the Mbam-Nkam group of Grassfields Bantu (Ayuninjam, 1998). This Ngemba group we also have Santa, Akum, Mankon, Mbatu, Chamba, Awing, Pinyin (See Fig 24). Based thus only on the Ngemba we can identify more than 15 villages which occupies an area less than 1000km² and all of which possessing community water schemes. It is hard to represent all these villages on a map but we will endeavour showing the 5 main chiefdoms[56] and some minor chiefdoms.

This example can be multiplied and the North West region alone inhabits more than 90 different villages speaking different languages and with well-defined limits even though there still exist inter-tribal wars to subdue neighbours and claim lands. The use of the community concepts in the Western Highlands cannot be in its simplest form because it will be a gross oversimplification of the diversities and complexities that characterize the area. Summarily, the cultural diversity acts more as a hindrance towards common projects and policies as we will demonstrate in the subsequent part of this study.

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[55] We can cite the case of Nkwen towards Njah (cooperation) and still Nkwen with neighboring Bambili (conflict)

[56] First class chiefdoms classified according to the state. The first class chief doms are followed by second and third classes

Conclusion

Water governance, is not a simple competitive process whereby the resource is a "political asset" that local politicians can wield in response to votes. The complex meanings attached to water beyond the simple idea that it is a livelihood asset can render the relationships between communities, households, and different water points complex and beyond the realm of simple "material understandings" of natural resources.

This conceptual part of our work have shown how understanding the reality behind policy facades, misconceptions about community capacities and roles, and the various competing and overlapping institutional relationships at a local level is essential to ensuring that new programming in water is more power-conscious, but also better able to adjust to the complex, heterogeneous nature of the 'community environment'. At a basic level, almost all water provision involves politics to varying degrees. The very process of shifting policy perspectives and approaches at the national level through legislation and policy development shuffles the institutional array at subsequent, lower levels. This changing array challenges established access routes to power and influence, and affects the balance between competing claims to legitimacy, whether in group affiliation, financial control, or in terms of party alignment. Addressing political aspects in water provision will ensure a more informed milieu in which to establish forms of community management that are adjusted and adjustable to local environments. This requires both the creation of a more effective interface between communities and local political leaders, as well as better informed local political actors, whether informal (traditional leaders) or formal (Mayor, Senior Divisional and Divisional Officers). Finally, it also requires the creation of local institutional structures between communities – perhaps the bundling together of water point committees at some level – in order to facilitate and strengthen water systems and to better address and represent the problems of access to water in small towns.

Conclusion of Part 2

Discussions of development highlight the challenges of working with contested concepts of community and governance. From the analyses of the different viewpoints in the two chapters that make up this part of our work, one can say that communities' relationship to the state and to the market are very competing. The conclusion to which case studies will point is the crucial importance of geographical, historical and socio-economic contexts, so that successful initiatives in one context cannot be guaranteed to work in another. Despite this controversy about the concepts debates highlight the main lessons that can be learned about the relationship between ideal communities and their achievement in reality, and most importantly at regional and national levels.

The main idea we put forward in this part of our work is that the uncertainty over what constitutes a "community" and how to define its boundaries has a significant impact on governance. And that communities can act as hindrances rather than enhance development. We identified four major interrelated themes: some elements of governance with particular attention on the institutional dimension, participation, hybrids, coordination, and community. These themes though at times do not influence communities directly, but they are closely related to broader concepts which reflect various dimensions of current community. The first theme; is that if considering communities as continues space with various linkages or relations and presenting communities as homogenous is criticized. Contrary to the idea of homogeneity, communities are disconnected and thus questions of divergence, along with ideas of conflict. This we used specific examples like inter tribal wars, individual interests and the fight for power by chiefs to prove that communities are far from being united.

The second theme addresses difference in relation to communities, both in a positive sense, in terms of celebrating social and cultural diversity and different identities and interests, and also in a negative sense, in terms of social exclusion which separates communities and maintains boundaries between outsiders and insiders. These differences present challenges to governance because they are often hidden or unacknowledged. It is all too easy to assume that because community members have something in common that they have everything in common, and for uncomfortable differences to be overlooked within the discourse of community as a place of consensual gathering.

The third theme relates to the first two through identifying a key problem bringing together communities through common rules and regulations. This theme highlights the existence of different types of boundaries which are relevant in contemporary contexts, particularly boundaries related to power and interests.

Finally, the fourth theme is of drawing the link between local or community water projects within a larger context, that of governance. These four themes are closely interconnected, and together they provide a useful agenda for addressing cross-cutting themes of community development with particular attention to the Cameroon Western Highlands.

PART III

IN SEARCH OF AN EFFICIENT AND SUSTAINABLE GOVERNANCE MODEL

Introduction of Part III

One of our hypotheses at the outset was that Cameroonian communities are diverse, non-linearly dynamic systems, exhibiting emergent behaviours All along in this part of our work we will be showing that nevertheless they offer a rich potential for understanding how processes of community engagement occur either by cooperating or contesting. In the preceding section we seek to show that communities are not as unified as usually presented. Rather we agree in this section that individuals seek to associate to defend cultural affinities and protect their common interests. Detailed analysis of Cameroonian communities can correct misperceptions of how community differences play out on the ground, and further observations show that crisis can give voice to hidden "marginalized" groups that would otherwise be unheard.

It gives a picture of Cameroon communities and present in detail 'The World of Water' in the Cameroon Western Highlands through the cases of Kumbo, Bali and Bafou and how various water-related aspects are negotiated in the day-to-day practices and interactions of actors. This part empirically explores small town social organizations (social capital), its social fabric, formal and informal arrangements and the role that these hierarchies play in water arrangements. Moreover, the chapter also illustrates small town (the role of civil society), socio-cultural matrix centered on water arrangements and ownership as also typified, as well as the power dynamics and access to water elucidated.

There are limits to the whole sector, especially in terms of blurry hierarchies and informal leadership. Our view stresses the need to recognize and acknowledge the presence of conflict and differential values as a part of the natural functioning of the democratic process. A future priority is how to build a constructive democratic public sphere that works with, rather than represses conflict and differences. For instance, our work also explores how local communities participate in local water development programmes and how different actors voice and stake their claims in the negotiation process to secure "mutually" beneficial interventions. It illustrates on how power relations and social exclusion influence the society and other marginalized groups within the formal and informal "participatory" arenas, and how these marginalized groups (small town communities) are ready to fight for more socio economic rights through water conflicts. It further highlights the diversity of communities and how the apparent co-habitation of formal and informal institutions renders water governance difficult.

CHAPTER 5

DIVERSITY OF WATER ACCESSIBLITY MODES IN THE CAMEROON WESTERN HIGHLANDS (THE CASE OF KUMBO, BALI AND BAFOU)

Introduction

Whilst large cities (greater than a million inhabitants) receive much attention from national and international authorities, most urban dwellers in developing countries live in cities with less than 50,000 inhabitants. The above holds the idea that small and medium size cities are often neglected and receive little or no support from the central government and international sources. Consequently, development in these cities depends mostly on non-conventional strategies that rely less on central government and bilateral funds and more on local and non-governmental bodies. The case studies to be discussed show how small cities (Kumbo 110 000 inhabitants, and Bali 50 000 inhabitants in North West Cameroon) in Cameroon in the face of shortages from the state employ self help strategies to address their water needs. In contrast to the joint efforts supplied by the residents in Kumbo and Bali, the strategies applied in Bafou are quite different and more individualistic.

5.1 The Case of Kumbo and its community water supply

Kumbo is the administrative headquarter of Bui Division in the North West region of Cameroun, one of Cameroon's ten regions (see Figure 2). It is sometimes referred to as Kimbo, Banso Nso or Nsaw. In general Nso refers to the culture while Kumbo to the town. It is 110km northeast of Bamenda, the regional capital. It is located at an altitude of 1770m, an annual rainfall of about 2660 mm, an average temperature of 21°C ranging between 14.8°C to a maximum of 30°C. The town presents a rugged terrain and is part of the Cameroonian "Grassfields" renowned for its savannah vegetation. The water supply in Kumbo serves around 40 000 people and has a capacity of 139 cubic metres per hour. It is gravity fed and uses stream sources from a partially protected watershed of 2008 hectares. There is a reservoir and treatment station (comprising sedimentation tanks, slow sand filters and chlorine dosing equipments), which require some consumption of electricity.

Being a hinterland city, Kumbo has hardly been a major point of interest to the government. Nevertheless, it is quite reputed for conserving its customs and tradition. The Kumbo

divisional council was established in 1977, succeeding the Nso Area Council which was part of the South West Federation (Njoh 2009). Current population estimates of the town vary but presenting an average of 110, 000. This makes Kumbo the second largest town in the North West Region after the regional capital, Bamenda. Agriculture constitutes the main activity of over 50% of the population with a small percentage engaged in petty trading and the formal sector (education, health).

Kumbo has a well established traditional administrative system, with a paramount chief (*fon*) at the head and operates as an auxiliary to the formal government structure with a divisional officer at its helm. Within the region, there were many different pre-colonial polities operating at a variety of scales. Chieftaincy and its associated institutions might be of much interest to researchers but also remain important to the culture and politics of contemporary Kumbo. In this light, observations on the field indicate the impact of politics in the management of the Kumbo Water Authority and vice versa. The tradition of organizing chiefs into a hierarchy with varying tasks and salaries continues unbroken to the present. In 1922 chiefs were given particular legal and fiscal responsibilities through the introduction of the indirect rule (Page, 2002).

As mentioned in the preceding chapters, since the German colonial period in Cameroon, the Germans relied on chiefs to collect taxes and the supply of labour to the plantations at the coast. This situation at times generated much conflicts and resistances so much so that by 1912 the Germans tried avoiding chiefs in this circuit and a more direct form of rule was adopted. It's worth noting that German penetration in Kumbo met with much resistance and an open battle where the German leader (Conrau) was killed. With the transfer of administration to the British, this policy was reversed and the powers of chiefs were again reinforced and very active. This tradition of bestowing much power to chiefs has remained till date where chiefs are considered as auxiliaries in administration. The Fon of Nso is at the highest level of the hierarchy of traditional rulers and continues to be paid a salary by the present day government. In return, he carries out a series of legal services (particular in resolving land disputes) on behalf of the government within his jurisdiction.

As elaborated in the literature of this study, this situation leaves the chief in an ambiguous position between his natives and the government. At times with allies who have bought traditional titles and are actively involved in politics of tradition in Kumbo (Page, 2002).

These elites in the long run accumulate wealth by manipulating national laws and local institutions and thereby drawing ones attention specifically in the supply of portable water. Most analyst of "development" portray much concerns on how it has been conceived in theory and practice. Focus on this notion at this juncture is to argue that "development from below" as embodied in Third World socio-political movements obscure enormous inequalities in classes, regions, ethnic and gender groups within any given community. In the case of Kumbo as will be discussed later, one realizes that the Kumbo water supply has always been the point of expression of the political grievances of the Nso people.

The chief is always in an ambiguous position in relation to the government and his community. On the one hand, he is a figure who should normally act according to the will of the majority (his community) and not necessarily according to his own belief or perceived self interest which lies in the hands of the government. It should be noted that the chieftaincy situation and the management of the Kumbo project cannot be treated separately as we will be illustrating in subsequent chapters.

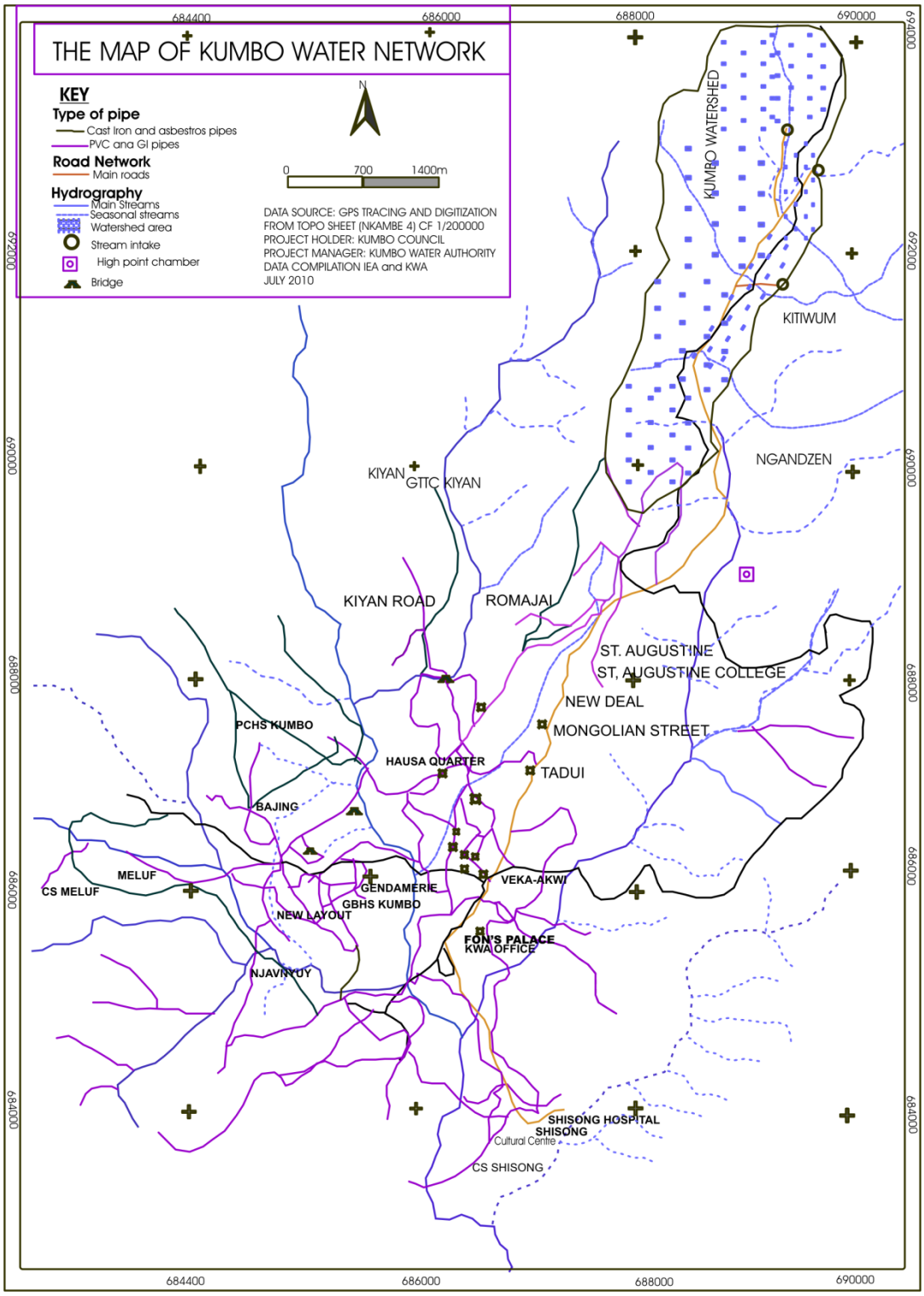
5.1.1 Conception and Realization of the Kumbo Scheme

The Kumbo water supply project was initiated in the 1960s and realized in 1972. Before the existence of this project, the inhabitants of Kumbo depended on Rivers Bui, Rookimbo and other streams to meet their water needs. From 1913 to 1960, colonial authorities operated a small pipe borne water supply scheme which served the residences and offices of colonial government officials (Njoh, 2009). The system was quite rudimentary as it depended on water from tanks mounted on roof tops that had to be manually filled by "water boys". In the late 1950s, the water problem was becoming acute due the double expansion of the town and its population.

Based on the planning model of the colonial authorities, water supply was considered as the entire responsibility of the state. In colonial and even post colonial (until 1972) Cameroon, the government body in charge of water supply was the Public Works Department (PWD). Due to the problem of resource scarcity, only towns considered as economically and administratively important were considered as a priority for the supply of potable water. Kumbo was neither economically nor administratively significant and therefore did not figure on the scale of preference. Consequently, all requests for piped borne water from the residents of Kumbo

bore no fruits. Even the post colonial era ignored the demands of the population, meanwhile pressure was mounting with the increase in population.

Figure 25: Kumbo Water Network



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5.1.2 The Kumbo Water Authority (KWA), in search of an equilibrium

The KWA has a complex ownership claim. There are two equally persuasive but contradictory accounts about the origin and evolution. On the one hand, the project is considered as an entirely community initiative with some financial support from Canadian government and Nso elites. Based on this account, members of the community have always considered the water supply as belonging to them and portray much resistance to any action of the state in the management of the system. Others consider it as a government owned scheme given the technical and diplomatic role of the Cameroon government in the construction. Consequently, the state has always considered the project as belonging to its portfolio of water supply systems of which it charges water rates. Even though there is a contradiction in the initiation of the project, there also exist some points of convergence. Firstly, the water project was the initiative of the community as well as a state-led scheme. The second common point is that community participation was both in cash (men: 1500FCFA and women: 1000FCFA) and kind (labour) towards the realization of the project. Furthermore, there is an agreement on the point that both the government and some renowned elites used their position to seek aid from international bodies which went a long way to ensure the sustainability of the project. Lastly, support came in from many sources including the Canadian government, the former Federal Republic of Cameroon, and the West Cameroon government.

Today, the Kumbo Water Authority faces some challenges in its management which deserve immediate attention to ensure a continuous and reliable water supply. The challenge for the management is centred on an efficient management of this locally available resource. Basically this should be focused on how to make use of the support from foreign donors for the success of the water project. Meanwhile some donors are not involved in the monitory of the support; a situation that gives way for corruption, others are quite present and act as partners. This is the case of the Canadian government which provided aid and did not follow up the supply and efficient use of the equipment. Nevertheless, many communities are trapped and obliged to work (cooperate, disagree etc) with donors and not given the chance to chose their aspired partners.

The first piped water supply system in Kumbo was conceived by the then West Cameroon government and constructed in 1968 and 1970 with the joint effort of community labour, with community financial contributions as well as the Public Works Department (PWD). The

evidence for these contributions can be available in the receipts issued by the Department for Urban development, which supervised the collection of the levy. The project was initially estimated at 200 million FCFA but actually costing 572 million FCFA (Njoh, 2009) meaning it was completely beyond the capacity the community. The project authorities found thus the need to seek assistance from other sources. In this light the community turned to the elites to use their government and international relations to help realize the project.

A community member and prominent professor of Nso who at the time was the deputy foreign minister of Cameroon negotiated with the Canadian government for support. Professor Fonlon[57] a well known Cameroonian intellectual had been born in Kumbo and maintained close links with his village though he schooled in Nigeria, Oxford and then La Sorbonne. Fonlon after paying a visit home realized from the complaints of his people that they were greatly in need of potable water. He was in Canada where he used his contacts with the Canadian prime minister and raised the question of water supply in Kumbo. After a feasibility study carried out by the Canadian government, a formal request for support was made to the Canada by the Cameroonian government.

The Canadian government agreed to furnish the materials that were necessary to complete the project at the Douala Seaport. It also supported the financial task of transporting to the Douala Seaport but was not to go beyond. The responsibility of transporting the equipments from the port (several kilometers from the port) depended on the project authorities. The transportation of the equipments from the port was quite problematic but the problem was solved by the community. Vehicles from the Nso Area Co-operative credit union delivered coffee to the coast and on their return gradually transported the materials to Kumbo. Back in Kumbo labour during the construction phase was organized by the f*on* through the traditional rulers in the different quarters. Based on tradition, certain days of the week are set aside for communal work. These days were then dedicated to the project. To avoid crowding on the field, the people were organized according to their quarters and assigned specific tasks to be completed on specific days. The quarters also organize on preparing and supplying food to the workers.

[57] He was born in Kumbo, Nso, Northwest Province, had his primary and secondary education in Cameroon and Nigeria and earned degrees from the University of Ireland, Sorbonne, and Oxford University, specializing in literature. In 1961, he was secretary in the office of the prime minister of Southern Cameroons, then worked for the President until 1964. Fonlon was then elected to the Federal Parliament, where he stayed until 1970, and served in the cabinet, first as deputy minister of foreign affairs, then as minister of transport, later posts and telecommunication, then health and social welfare.

When the project was completed, there were 74 stand taps from which people could drink free of charge. In acknowledgement for his efforts Bernard Fonlon was accorded the traditional title of *Shu-fai Ntodez*[58], which means "sub chief of the water source".

5.1.3 A turning point in the project management

The next phase in the management of the water supply is of so much importance because since its mutation there have never been a stable period. Shortly after the completion of the water supply the state speedily placed it under the Public Works Department, which at the time was a unit of the Ministry of Mines and Power in 1974. This system existed and benefited from great improvements from this department. Local accounts hold that the state issued a presidential order placing all water supplies under SNEC (Sociéte Nationale des Eaux du Cameroun) control. This transfer was opposed in council meetings and the community at large. The majority of the population is of the view that the *fon* and mayor were manipulated into signing a handover contract. Not long after the handing over of the management, the residents considered water rates to be too high and deterioration of the water quality. This situation forced the people of Kumbo to go back to collecting dirty water from streams.

The grievances of the population reached its hike in August 1991 when they decided to reclaim what they believe is rightfully theirs. The protest was led by university students who invaded and took over SNEC installations. The protesters charged that SNEC was exploitative by charging for a service that they had conceived and realized by themselves. This action was followed by the withdrawal of SNEC and the handing over of the management to Kumbo residents who reorganized community works for repairs. The response of the central government from the national capital, Yaounde, was to dispatch an armed military troop which succeeded to bring order only after 6 protesters had been shot to dead.

In 1992, meetings were held convened by the *fon* and was resolved that a constituted group be set up for the proper operation and management of the water supply. This led to the creation of an interim water management committee while waiting for the creation of a more organized body. In 1994, an enlarged special General Assembly of the Nso Development and

[58] In Nso'o there exist a noble hierarchy to differentiate between the levels of chiefs and sub chiefs. From top to bottom it follows this order; the fon (who reigns over the whole chiefdom or fondom), the Fai (all the sub chiefs of Nso'o) the shu fai, shey and shu shey. The fon and fais are divine with patrilineal lineages while the others can be acquired but you must have to be crowned or honoured by the fon.

cultural Association (NSODA) was convened with the participation of the traditional council, elites, quarter heads, and consumers' representatives to examine the best structure within the legal structure in force. It was resolved that NSODA take over the management of the Kumbo water supply. This led to the creation of an autonomous community water supply organization known as the Kumbo Water Authority (KWA). This body is supposed to perform functions like: Collection, treatment, storage and distribution of potable water to the population, billing, levy collection, operation, maintenance and network extension, catchment protection and water quality monitoring, funding opportunities and establish local, national and international partnerships for capacity building and material support to ensure sustainability.

Following law N° 2004/18 of 22 July 2004 based on the rules applicable to councils, they have been given the responsibility of distribution of potable water within their jurisdiction. Moreover, in a bit to situate the management of the Kumbo water supply under a legal framework, Global Water Partnership Cameroon[59] has facilitated the transfer of the project management to the Kumbo Council.

GWP Cameroon has cooperated with the Kumbo Urban Council and the locally managed Kumbo Water Authority to improve the management of water supply in Kumbo, where the ownership of the water supply system has resulted in a more than thirty year long conflict. The work of GWP has contributed to the re-opening of public taps, extension of coverage and the introduction of a differential water tariff structure. Moreover, an inclusive and participatory community water governance structure involving key stakeholders has been established, and the Kumbo Water Authority is currently engaged in participatory protection and conflict resolution over the catchment area.

As we already mentioned, the Kumbo water supply system has a complex ownership claim. On the one hand, it is claimed to belong to the Nso community. Others consider it to be government-owned. There is also an ongoing conflict between locals and the municipal water supply system management over the use of the catchment area. In 1984, a presidential decree institutionalized state operation of all urban water supply systems under the Cameroon

[59] GWP was founded in 1996 by the World Bank, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), and the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (SIDA) to foster integrated water resource management (IWRM). It has regional(13) and country water partnerships(83); in Cameroon the country water partnership is called Global Water Partnership Cameroon. Each Regional or Country Water Partnership develops its own Regional Strategy that specifies outcomes specific to the characteristics and priorities of its region.

National Water Corporation. This turned out to be problematic as locals were not involved in the management structure of the corporation. Real trouble however started when the Kumbo Council was billed for water consumed at public standpipes. Disconnection of over 60 public standpipes followed, services deteriorated according to the Nso People and as water tariffs escalated, people had to return to unprotected streams for their daily water needs.

Following the political upheavals in Cameroon in 1991, the Cameroon National Water Corporation was forcefully expulsed. The local institution of Kumbo Water Authority replaced it, but it had problems of legality and as a result conflicts followed. In 2004, following decentralization laws in Cameroon, GWP Cameroon, together with the Kumbo Urban Council, facilitated the transfer of water supply management to the Kumbo Urban Council. In our subsequent chapters we will be analyzing the link between local water supplies and party politics by showing how the former served like entry point to counter national politics. At this juncture in the evolution of the management of the KWA there will be a halt as critical analyses will be carried out after carrying out an overview of the Bali water system. Preferably we will present a joint analysis of the cases of Bali and Kumbo after presenting the evolution of the Bali water supply.

5.2 The Bali Community water supply under political and elite influence

Bali Nyonga commonly known as Bali belongs to the Chamba Leko group that migrated from the Chamba area of what is today known as Northern Cameroon to the Bamenda grassfields (Fokwang 2003). The date of their exodus is not certain but could be estimated to be the beginning of the second quarter of the 19th century (Fisiy, 1995). Historically, accounts hold that the Chambas were the last of the ethnic groups to settle in the grassfields of Bamenda in the second half of the 19th century (Fisiy, 1995). Under the leadership of Gawolbe, the Chamba group arrived Banyo (the Adamawa region) in about 1825 where they incorporated a number of other groups. In the numerous battles aimed at subjugating other groups Gawolbe was killed and succeeded by Gangsin in about 1836 but his unpopularity and inability to sustain the cohesion of the groups triggered a struggle for the throne. As a result of the fact that none of Gawolbe's sons was able to emerge the group later split into seven factions with each faction led by his seven sons and daughter. The seven groups were Bali Kumbat, Bali Gashu, Bali Gham, Bali Muti, Bali Gangsin, Bali Kontan and Bali Nyonga. Bali nyonga was led by the only daughter Nanyonga which had the strongest faction and constitutes our main focus in this study.

5.2.1 Conception and evolution of the Bali water supply and Party Politics

The Bali water project was built in 1957 during the British colonial administration and was administered by the Bali Native Authority under the leadership of *Fon* Galega II. This administration continued after independence until the management was handed over by the National Water Corporation. It is actually uncertain the exact dates of the taking over of the Bali water supply but SNEC took over all community water supplies in 1967 with a 40 years concession contract. What we can note is that the management under SNEC became inefficient and unpopular. In the early 1990s people complained of high bills, untreated water and long periods of unavailability. The Bali Rural Council[60] also complained of SNEC's treat to cut supplies in the town because of unpaid bills amounting to 17 million FCFA. But the last straw that broke the camel's back was SNEC's decision to cut water to the palace, an action that provoked the anger of the population against SNEC. On the 10th of January 1994, the Bali population stormed the local SNEC office and ordered the officials out of the town after demanding that their water installations should be handed over to local control. The office was also set ablaze and most of the SNEC documents and bills destroyed.

After the successful overthrow of SNEC, the Bali Community Water Committee (BCWC) was established as a management committee to oversee the functioning of the installations. Bills were reduced significantly and the Bali elites in Cameroon and abroad were call upon to make annual contributions to ensure the smooth functioning of the water supply. In 1996, Bali elites in the United States, under the banner of the Bali Cultural Association- USA (BCA-USA)[61], established a Water Committee that devised a plan through which community members (especially abroad) could make contributions and pay the bills of their families back in Bali.[62] Apparently BCWC functioned without any major crisis from the 1994 to 2000.

It should be recalled however that before the water committee was formed, the *fon* had showed his interest to head the committee. The Bali community had opposed the *fon's* campaign and advocated that a commoner should head the committee who could be accountable to the population and the *fon*. As a result, the *fon* is reported to have withdrawn

[60] By then Bali was still a rural council but it is presently a subdivision
[61]The Bali Cultural Association is now known as the Bali Cultural and Development Association (BANDECA)
[62]Http://groups.yahoo.com/group/mbonbani

his candidature leading to the election of a retired engineer Mr Dinga[63], to head the water committee. The present president is a retired civil engineer who has worked with the United Nations and was solicited to replace the former whose management brought no major solution to the numerous water problems, such as excessive prices and cuts.

In 2000, the leadership of the water committee was changed following an election that was generally perceived to be dubious, a notable and a prominent member of the ruling party (Cameroon Peoples Democratic Movement, CPDM) replaced the retired and experienced engineer. According to many informants it was rumoured that the government had promised to reward this notable and the *fon* with the sum of 15 million FCFA if they returned the water supply to SNEC[64]. In line with the rumour, it was alleged that the poor management of the water supply was the *fon's* plot to get government to intervene and seize control of the water installations on the grounds that the local population was not able to manage the system. According to the Bali people, they think the new president was inexperienced and accorded little or no time for the job. According to the elected notable, the water infrastructure was too old and needed to be changed. This, he says, cannot be done by the population.

At the moment it is obvious that the struggle over the control of water will continue for a long time and that this is one of the issues the fon either build or hinder his relationship with his subjects. In 2007, the water crisis reached its hike as the water prices paid by the Bali population (more than 350 FCFA/m³) were even higher than the national figure (271 FCFA/M ³), This situation finally led to many more problems as the population refused to pay their bills. This present president (of BANDECA) tried to give us an explanation to help our understanding of the excessive water prices in Bali. He explained that the water treatment plant uses electricity. Under SNEC management, there existed a contract between SNEC and the national Electricity Corporation (SONEL, Société Nationale de l'Electricité). The fact that the Bali population have taken over the management of the water supply breaks the contract that existed between the National Electricity Corporation. The Bali water supply under SNEC management certainly benefitted from cross subsidy from other projects which were relatively cheaper.

During my last visit to Bali the transformer (see picture below) regulating electricity supply to

[63]Fictional name
[64]Which had now been privatised to the Cameroon Water Utilities Company (CAMWATER) and CDE

the purification station had just been repaired after being down for the past three months. This means chemical treatment was not carried out.

Plate 4: Newly repaired transformer just before our visit in August 2011*, Ngefor G.S., 2011*

Since 1991, the management of the Bali water supply is facing serious problems. The difficulties could be classified into three main groups. Firstly, the inability of the management to cover costs which manifest in the excessive water prices as indicated above and delays in repairs of infrastructures such as the transformer which was down for three months. The second problem we put forward to the poorer efficiency of the Bali projects is directly linked to its management structures as we will be analyzing in the next chapter. The management framework is still very tied to the traditional organization and thus under the influence of the chief and his entourage. Thirdly and more importantly, the Bali chief is one of those chiefs forcing their way into national party politics against the wish of his people. This influences the decision of the Bali population to accept aid from the state as they think its yet another means of controlling their political choices. In this light most of the problems faced by the Bali water scheme is directly or indirectly linked to party politics as illustrated below.

5.2.2 Bali Community Water Supply viewed from a political lens

Almost every contentious issue in Bali could be explained in terms of party politics. This view is illustrated by the struggle over the control of water supply in the chiefdom. In the early 1990s, Bali was in a state of serious water crisis, it was alleged that the recent change in the management of the Bali Community Water Committee (BCWC) was partly to blame. According to informants, the invisible hands of some CPDM elites and the *fon* in particular were behind the crisis as illustrated in the preceding. The previous management led by a non partisan notable and retired engineer was replaced by a leading CPDM member. When the water crisis eventually started, the Bali population was convinced that the crisis was an intentional act of the new management to hand over the water supply to the National Water Corporation (SNEC) in return for 15 million FCFA. To understand the complex nature of the crisis, I will describe the detailed background to the story of water supply in Bali.

Going back to the relationship between water management and politics, Ganyonga is involved in the activities of the Bali Nyonga Cultural and Development Association (BANDECA), an elite group consisting of civil servants, business persons interested in the socio-economic development of the community. This association has a "translocal" nature with many national and international branches such as Yaounde, Douala, Limbe, Bamenda, Kumba and international branches in Europe and North America. BANDECA succeeded the Bali social, Cultural and Development Association (BASCUDA). The association was revived in 1999 and resumed its activities in 2000. Since its new era the association is very active and has set a community library, a urinal and bathroom in the town centre, donated computers to the Government High school Bali, medical equipment to the District Hospital and construction a modern mortuary.

At this juncture, there is need to bring in a bit of the history of Cameroon to help enlighten our further analyses. Although I endeavour to limit myself to the community water supplies within small communities, this is impossible given the relevance of broader developments. This may include amongst others the role of chiefs in national politics[65] playing the double role of local rulers and national stooges. Theorizing democracy and accountability in Cameroon ought to emphasize networking and creative encounters with others. This focus

[65] This phenomenon will be given greater attention as it constitutes a major instrument in the management of community water supplies today in Cameroon

should check the application of misleading labels, and draw attention to the various pressures exerted on the state and private corporate entities by various groups in various ways for various reasons of empowerment. As people increasingly distrust states, markets and NGOs to accommodate their needs, they will continue to explore other avenues of fulfilling their expectations. In certain cases and situations, functions usually served by civil society as voluntary organizations have been performed by non-voluntary groups and lobbies such as ethnic elite associations and development unions, often under unelected leadership. Walking the corridors of power and resources seeking political and economic empowerment and representation for their regions or peoples became the rule during the 90s. We will be proving this view that in an environment of general disarray, local figures could benefit from the disorder in the society to impose themselves. This was and is still the case of the chiefs in the North West region who had to convince their communities that their fight for position in party politics is a way of attracting state to participate in development in their areas.

The fact that chiefs are custodians of land in many parts of Africa means they could play crucial roles in the socio-economic development of their chiefdoms. Fisiy (1995) argues that in order to understand chiefs' role properly, it is important to examine 'the relation between their control over people and over resources', the most important of which is land. For most rural people, he argues 'the control and management of land is at the heart of control over people' (Fisiy 1995). The history of difficulty at implementing liberal democracy in Africa attests to this clash of values and attempts to ignore African cultural realities that might well have enriched and domesticated liberal democracy towards greater relevance.

On the one hand, the lives of subjects were regulated by chiefs under customary law, and those of the entire nation by modern law. And the tragic tale is that most postcolonial states in Africa, Cameroon inclusive, succeeded in deracialising but did not democratize the state, thereby maintaining the basic framework of "decentralized despotism" to the detriment of the rural peasantry. The foregoing assumptions therefore maintain that owing to the co-optation and corruption of traditional leadership during the colonial era, chiefs may perhaps not accumulate enough legitimacy to act decisively on behalf of the rural poor. Similarly, it follows that their role towards the material development of their communities remains doubtful, if not aimed at exploiting the rural poor.

1990 was a turning point not only for the civil society in Cameroon and many other political

actors, but also for chiefs. The *fon* of Bali's involvement in local politics has been a subject of much controversy, his candidature as mayor of Bali council, his aspirations in the North west chiefs' Association and his suppose defensive position for the « anglophone cause ». After our stay in Bali and interviews with the Bali people, we deduce that while a small percentage (20%) of the population think that *fon's* involvement in politics can be beneficial to development in Bali a greater part (60%) of the population was against. This people were convinced that chiefs were not to interfere in party politics and the participation of the *fon* is mainly for his personal ambitions and not for the development of Bali as he insinuates. An understanding of *fons'* involvement in party politics in Cameroon can only be understood within the broader context of party politics in Cameroon. We will draw our attention to the effects of the participation of *fons* since the new democratic era in Cameroon (introduction of multipartism in 1990) and local development in general and community water supplies in the cases of Kumbo and Bali chosen for this study.

Since 1990 Bali and Kumbo and many other villages in the North West region have been host to conflicting political interests which are creating some more socio-political elites and differences in communities. The appointment of Ganyonga (*fon* of Bali) and other chiefs into key positions in the running party CPDM (the Cameroon Peoples' Democratic Party) is an example of those acts served as a source of division. The conflict was mainly between the two major parties in the region; the Social Democratic Front (SDF) the new opposition party and the ruling party (CPDM). We propose that the reintroduction of multipartism in Cameroon created room for *fons* who had been dormant to enter into the political arena, Party politics thus not only provided a scene for *fons* to "participate" in fashioning the Cameroon's future but above all increase their individual and collective interests. But the *fons'* new status in the CPDM and consequently, their overt participation in party politics triggered much debate on the role and status of traditional rulers in the new democratic era. Initial reactions to the chiefs' involvement were really bitter because the population knew it always had very close links with local development.

President Biya was accused of destabilizing the strong chiefs of the North West region[66] by politicking their role against their traditional vows to their community. The newly independent and critical press frequently wrote articles authored by members of the civil

[66] The fons of Mankon, Bali and Bafut, three out of the five first class chiefs in the North West Region who were given national appointments in the ruling party each rule more than 60 000 inhabitants. Even the fon of Nso another first class chief was found in between his chieftaincy title and national politics

society and subjects of the chiefs in which they condemned the *fons* for allowing themselves be manipulated by President Biya. By accepting to part of party politics the subjects hold that these *fons* have abdicated from their role of impartial rulers in view of the party competition which was still to reach its hike in the country. Critics hold that the decision assumed by Biya was to use the winning of the *fons* as a strategy towards gaining future votes in the forth coming elections through the influential and respected grassfield *fons*. In other words the co-optation of *fons* into party politics was expected to reinforce their influence at the local level rather than undermine it. Given the above situation two camps developed, on the one hand, those who were completely against the participation of chiefs in party politics, and on the other hand, those who argued that chiefs should participate freely in politics.

Even though this debate has continued till date, the chiefs tried to defend themselves by assuming that they are citizens and they have the right to parten to whichever party they wish to. Whatever the case, the involvement of the *fons* in party politics especially to the ruling party has brought his legitimacy in question. I wish to examine briefly some of the contentious issues that became dominant, how these issues did not affect the *fon* alone but the entire community.

1992 was the long waited year by Cameroonians when presidential elections were organized with the SDF which had become very popular in the North West, South West, Littoral and Western regions. Although SDF was quite popular in the North West region, most *fons* who were involved in party politics were in the ruling party which was much provocative to the disappointed citizens, firstly because not only have the *fons* gone against their neutrality role, it was clear they were more engaged in safeguarding their interests. Given the growing unpopularity of the CPDM many people anticipated unanimous victory by the opposition but Biya shocked everyone with his victory. This period was extremely precarious for supporter of the CPDM including the *fons* of the North West region. Citizens organized hostile parades and matched into palaces. Although *fon* Ganyonga was exempted, it was not the case of *fon* Angwafor of Mankon. This strikes reached their peak in November when the angry population stormed the Mankon palace protesting against his meddling with party politics.

Ganyonga sought to make use of this opportunity to head the local council by standing as the CPDM candidate. Informants insisted that is was not “normal” for the *fon* to compete with a commoner in a democratic elections. Even members of the CPDM were completely against

the fact that the *fon* should stand as the party candidate for the elections. CPDM militants who opposed his candidature decided to elect their own candidate. Eventually the CPDM had two contendants for the post of mayor within the same municipality, the *fon* and another candidate. Although the *fon* emerged as the CPDM candidate, at the end he was defeated by the SDF candidate. His defeat made him very unpopular as had been predicted by those who opposed his candidature. However, the political atmosphere has changed especially with the people expectations about democracy's since 1990

The open participation of *fons* in party politics against their communities' wish played negatively on their popularity. The North West region of Cameroon being the seat of opposition in Cameroon were convinced chiefs could never play the double role of being with the state and ensuring free[67] local development. Although the struggle between the CPDM and SDF characterized local politics for over a decade, the *fon's* involvement in specific lobbies helped to dilute the low esteem the people had for him. But his role in other events such as the water crisis instead revived suspicion and resentment against him. In the following paragraphs, I will consider the *fon's* position in the water incident and assess the extent to which he lost or gained popularity. As illustrated in part two of our work, we will be criticizing the role of chiefs as unclear as concerns their interest and that of their community. Moreover we put a link between the influence of national politics through chiefs and local development especially water supplies. Before this, we will be presenting the case of Bafou with its numerous strategies in solving water accessibility. Furthermore the case of Bafou shows other forms of elite control over their neighbours through water.

5.3 A relatively individualistic approach to solving water problems in Bafou

The selection of Bafou in this study is to illustrate one of the diverse water accessibility strategies implored in Cameroon to solve domestic water problems. Unlike the North and South West regions of Cameroon, the Bamileke population hardly succeeds to construct common water supply projects. This phenomenon was of great interest not only because we intended to see the roots of the "apparent success" of the community approach in the North and South west regions even though the western neighbours have proven their solidarity in developing and managing agricultural and micro finance Common Initiative Groups. We also

[67] "Free" here we mean development without reciprocal political actions from the population

observe that they can develop and manage Common Initiative Groups with Economic objectives. The question is why the Bafou population finding it difficult to transfer this knowledge in the development of large common water supplies.

Actually, the strategies to solve water problems in Bafou are partly a result of the failure of putting in place many water projects within the framework of the Western High Plateau projects (Projets Hauts Plateaux de l'Ouest). In effect, water captured from the Djutitssa escarpment sufficiently supplied Bafou. This system was efficient. It was not until the coffee crisis coupled with the political crisis of the mid 1985 to 1990s when agricultural practices changed and gave way for the cultivation of alternative cash crop products. The farmers out rightly broke and directed the distribution pipes to their farms. At the beginning, the quarter heads under-rated the impact until it became a wide spread phenomenon without control. It was during this era that the SCANWATER projects were installed in some regions of Bafou. Present water strategies in Bafou are both individual and collective. The map below illustrates the distribution of SCANWATER supplies. We will note that only the Southern part of Bafou was supplied by the SCANWATER project even though it was short-lived giving way to numerous other strategies.

5.3.1 Water accessibility modes in Bafou

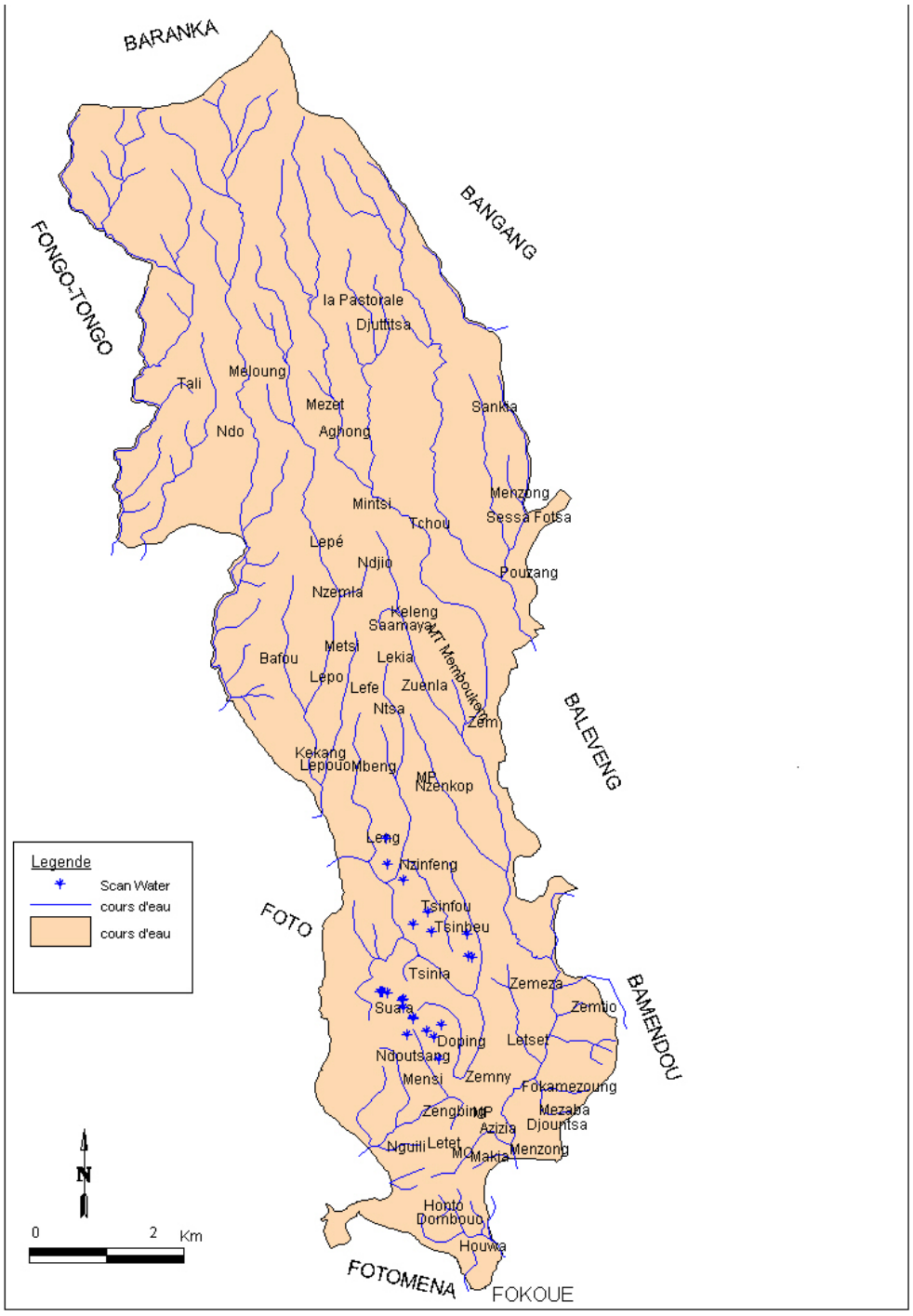
As mentioned in the introductory part of this work, data used in the case of Bafou was gathered with a research team under the CORUS project in 2007. The research team was made up of twelve Masters and PhD students in the University of Dschang. The twelve students were further divided into groups of three persons with each group working on a well delimited space having a GPS to identify all water points that serve the community. Information was obtained through a guided interview (attached as appendix 2) and two other field studies carried out during our two visits to Cameroon in November 2009 to March 2010, then July to October 2011. At the end of each day information gathered was introduced by all groups and harmonized with common codes. Later on, a report was written on the water accessibility strategies adopted by the Bafou community. The choice of Bafou was for two main reasons. Firstly, to serve as a case for a comparative study to understand the disparities between the water strategies in Anglophone and francophone parts of Cameroon. The second reason is to create a link between the different water strategies and socio-economic organization of the society.

Looking at the water modes in Bafou, we realize the physical and human constrains that lie behind the different strategies adopted by its population. We will not get to the detail of the influence of the relief on the water strategies but it is worth mentioning that wells are adopted in areas that are not permeable due the soils. In areas where the rocks are difficult to penetrate, the population use mainly constructed natural springs, rivers and streams. Almost all the spring sources are constructed and supply good quality water, at least physically. We can also identify cisterns (reservoirs) even though most of them are more than 30 years as they were used during the coffee era.

Presently in Bafou, one can identify small groups that are trying to realize mini projects (artesian wells). The problem is that outside the catchment area situated on escarpments, there exist no other favourable sites where water can be captured by gravitation. With this difficulty, this brilliant idea (of constructing community water schemes) hardly go beyond the development committees at quarter levels. The population is angry to their contributions they made which bore no fruits (with the failure of SCANWATER) and cannot be convinced again to make such contributions. Even though the government and NGOs come along with encouragements that they could help finance such common projects, it seems this population is far from being convinced. This is maybe because their intervention is seen as electoral propaganda to win the populations' votes and drop their plea after.

SCANWATER project was introduced in Bafou in 1985 (Rapport Bafou, 2007). SCANWATER was a project that installed collective tap stands with good quality water and the system functioned with a pump. The whole system is out of function but for one tap stand that has been rehabilitated and is now supplying three quarters (Tsingla, Doumetsang and Doubing, see fig 20). We identified 23 SCANWATER tap stands in Bafou (Fig 27) and three tanks of which two have been rehabilitated. Outside the SCANWATER project (which is virtually inexistent and even very difficult to identify as the tap stands have been covered by grass) there exist no other collective pipe water supplies.

Figure 26: Map of Bafou showing SCANWATER projects (Rapport Bafou, 2007)



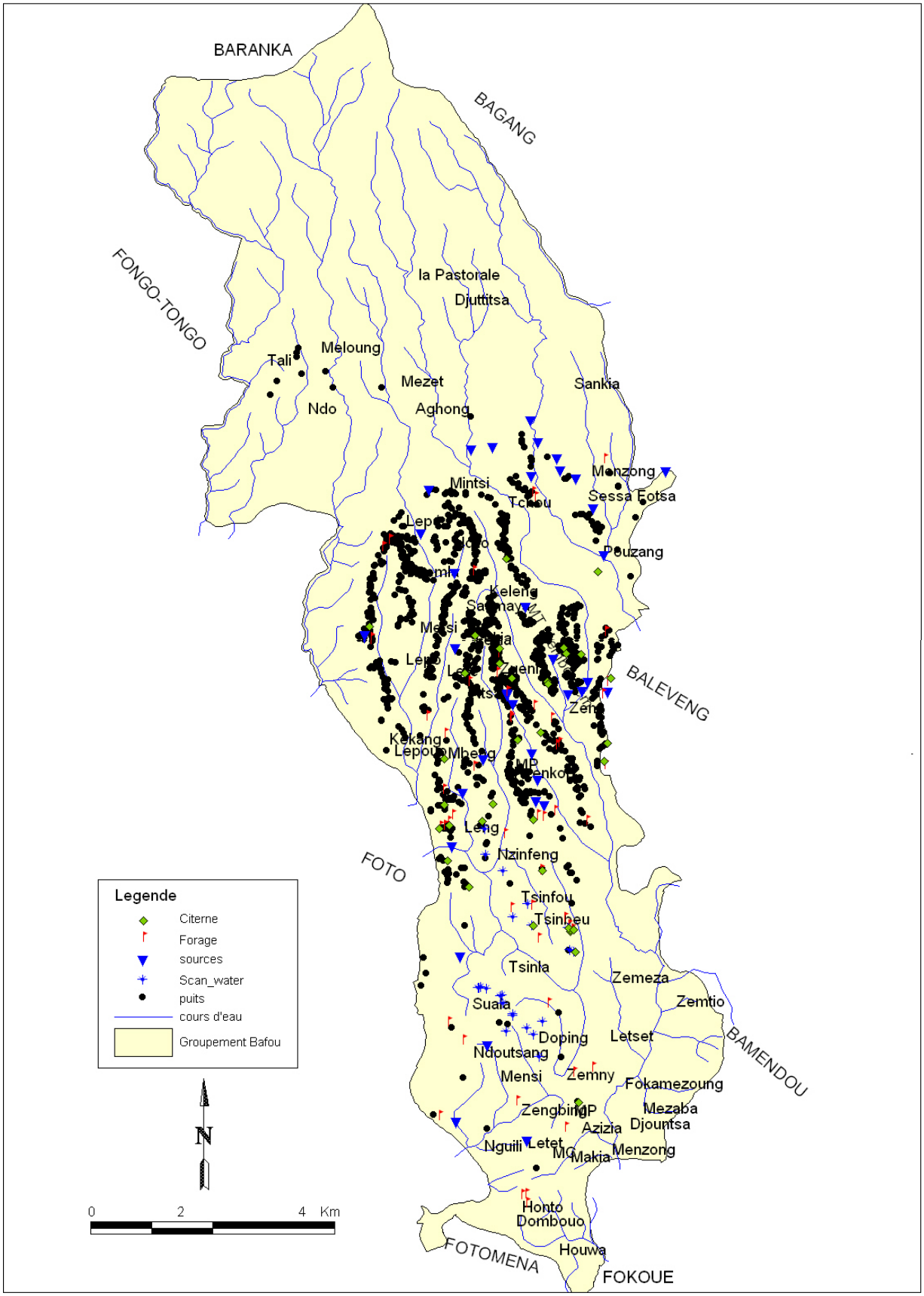
Source: Rapport Bafou, 2007

In the North of Bafou, water supplies are absent and can be justified by the low population density. Whereas in the South due to the lack of natural water sources, we identified SCANWATER projects (see fig 20). Meanwhile, more than three quarters of them are out of function because the population was unable to organize themselves to continue with the

maintenance challenge as was the case in the North West and South west regions. In effect the water management committees put in place were not able to mobilize the necessary funds to ensure the proper functioning of the pumping system. After the first five years, most of the schemes were defunct. We also realize that the NGOs concerned and the elites neglected the populations' voice and opinion. Collective strategies to renovate the water schemes were short-lived. This situation gave way for individuals to take up the challenge to meet their water needs. This can be considered as one of the main reasons behind the individual well ownership in Bafou. Our findings confirm this view as it was noted that the average age of many wells was between 15 to 25 years dating back to the late eighties and early nineties when the Bafou population had lost all hope from donors and the government.

On the contrary there exist other collective water strategies. Of the 36 spring sources identified, two were well constructed by a water management committee and two others by individuals and the rest of the sources were monitored by the population but it is worth noting that there exists no organized management framework to guide this initiative. This could explain the poor state of the water supplies as monitoring in this light simply implies clearing around sources and applying some basic sanitary measures. Spring sources are used mostly for drinking and other domestic purposes. Those living too far from water sources use spring water only for drinking and fetch water from wells for other uses. Most spring sources served an average of 20 households with some providing water supply to as many as 60 households and more, over distances of greater than 2 km. Interest bringing out these figures is to compare with community water supplies in the North and South West regions. Although facing many difficulties which pose the problem of their sustainability, the population of Bali and Kumbo for example do not have problems of water quality and distances (access) as public tap stands are placed at distances of 250m from each other with the aim to meet the WHO definition of access to water in relation to distance. These notwithstanding, most households have private connections. Still in a bid to understand the differential water strategies adopted by the Bafou (Western region in general) population, we pushed our reflection beyond the water context to understand the organization of the Bafou community.

Figure 27: map of Bafou showing water supply strategies (Rapport Bafou, 2007)



Source: Rapport Bafou, 2007

5.3.2 Organization of space and social cohesion around water supplies in Bafou

Coming back to the realization and management of mini water projects, we observed that there is a certain degree of solidarity of community organization around wells (both types of wells). The Bamiléké[68] people of the Western region of Cameroon are very capitalistic. Here, the respect of private propriety predominates. Due to the relative difficulty to drill wells as a result of the altitude (1400m) a situation which necessitates an average of 18m to meet the water table, there is thus a serious water problem. This is in addition to the financial constraint as most often many attempts can bear no fruits due to the inability of detecting appropriate sites. Thus only the rich and those with moderate income can afford drilling wells.

In this light water is used judiciously and choosing whom to share with becomes obligatory. The management of wells is private and most wells are shared based on family ties rather than community links. This also holds true for tanks (citernes). On the contrary a certain degree of community management could be observed around deep wells (forage), springs and streams.

Even though it has been proven that the management of water is always accompanied by disputes and conflicts, the case of Bafou is peculiar. Here the absence or presence of a water supply point in a locality can generate socio-spatial relations that we regrouped into three different categories; the relationship between a well owner and his family members, the relationship between a well owner and neighbours, and the relationship between a well owner living out of Bafou and neighbours.

Water supply points act as attraction points in Bafou. Where population densities were very high, the well sharing was amongst family members in order to avoid the water source from drying off during the dry season. Meanwhile, when density figures are low the ties can extend to neighbours. We observed this in the far North and South of Bafou where the densities are lower than the central part.

In Bamiléké societies, the sharing of wells by many different households does not necessarily mean family ties. In Bafou, most often, neighbouring households can use wells without particular constraints. This backs the idea that solidarity can also be observed in this region even though they are incapable of conceiving and realizing large scale common water

[68] A good knowledge of these people could be gotten from Dongmo Jean Louis (1981) "Dynamisme Bamiléké (Cameroun), La maitrise de l'espace agraire, Vol 1 and 2, Université de Michigan.

projects. Meanwhile the relationship between proprietors and users are more or less cordial. Still in some areas mostly occupied by the rich, the sharing of wells was almost inexistent especially for agricultural purposes. Based on this view, we developed two minor hypotheses as concerns the development of large piped community water supplies in Bafou in particular and the Western region in general. We hold that, due to the self sufficiency of the average and moderate income population in water supplies, it is almost out of question to talk of realizing community water schemes in Bafou (francophone Cameroon). Secondly, well owners in Bafou constitute an upper class as they have a certain control over those with whom they share their wells.

The degree of water problems in Bafou make water proprietors feel like “demi gods”. Water remains a major source of livelihood and this reduces the pride of users as they are bound to succumb to the rules and attitudes of the owners. Accepting to share wells with neighbours and family members was thus not only an act of solidarity but also as an arena to exercise power and control. Nevertheless hardly will this good will gesture go without their negative repercussion. To understand the degree of this problem, of the total of 55 deep wells (forage) identified 44 were private property, making up for 80 percent.

At the beginning of this study we put the hypothesis that the adoption of disparate water supply strategies was mainly as a result of the fact that Francophones (Bafou in this case) strongly depend on state intervention. Our observations on the field showed that this idea has gradually died down. Not only is the state very slow to action but it has officially delegated the management of potable water in small towns and villages to NGOs. Maybe the main problem underlying the lack of confidence in the state is due to the fact that most politicians seem to use the population to gain their positions after which they never meet their objectives and campaign slogans. Thus there exist interesting forms of elites in Bafou, who unlike those of the North and South west regions are people who are economically more viable than the rest of the community. What was peculiar to all sites is that whether they were social, economic or political elites, these influential groups of people are the ones setting the rules in their communities. In this light we considered it necessary to understand the power relation that exist between social position and influence in the local development with particular attention to water supplies.

5.4 Power, Water and Money: The Role of chiefs and elites in local water supplies

In our literature on water-related conflicts we regrouped all causes under two broad headings; interest and power. Access to potable water in urban and rural residents is highly problematic and uneven. Small towns and even rural water supplies are always subsidized (headed by donors) with market principles quite difficult to understand and even more complex than in urban environments. This suggests that the problem of water access and control is primarily a question of purchasing power. In other words, access to water is a function of money then to social power which influences the organization of territories. The relationship between social power and water access is even more acute in societies that are dependent on hydraulic infrastructure and localized water supplies such as the cases we are studying.

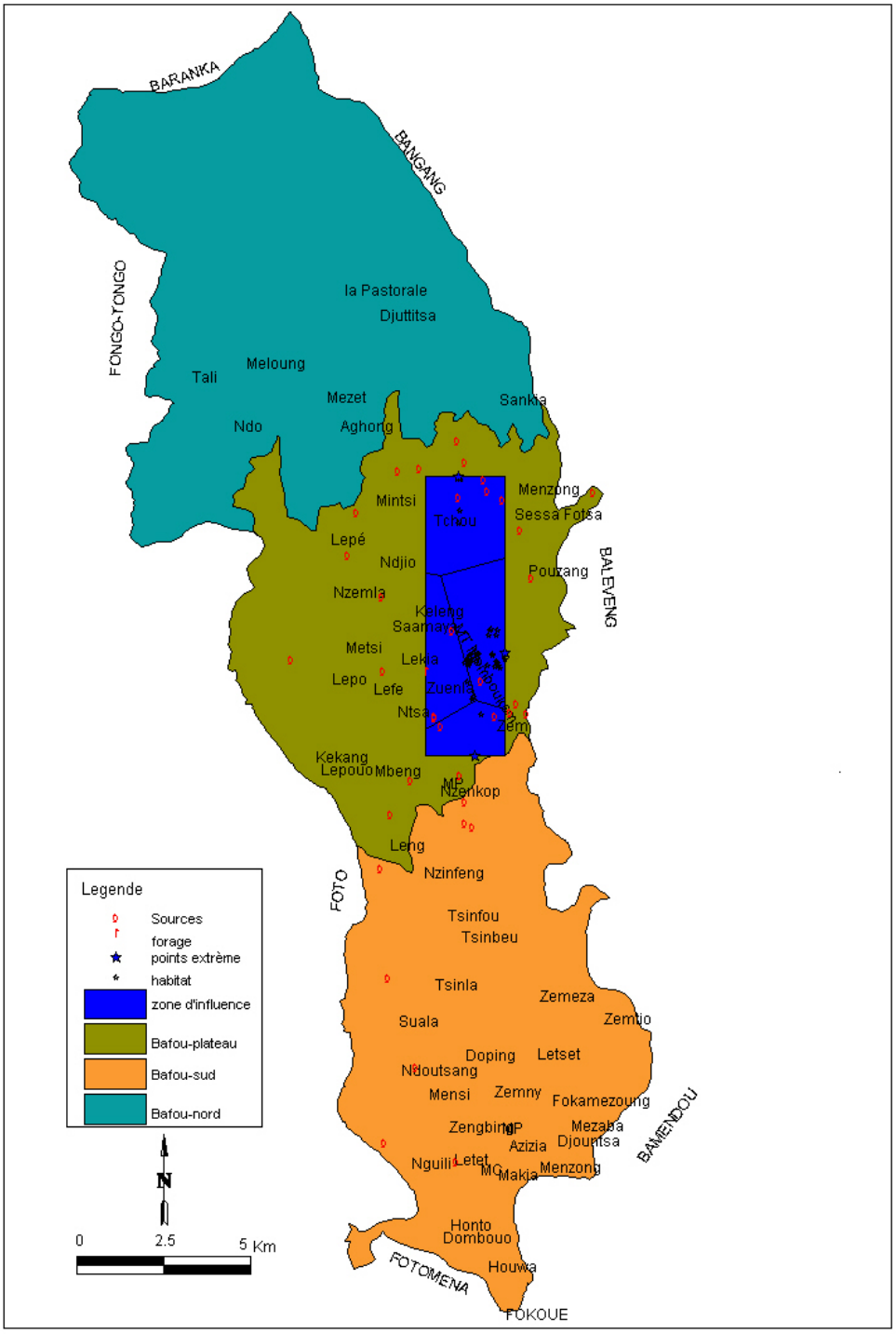
As observed in our sites, the obvious conflicts between water users, between local residents and the hierarchy can be as a result of the displacement of people, the subsequent distribution of water which in most cases depends on social power (some quarters are first of all supplied at the detriment of others and in cases where the finances are short the quarters of the poorest are those left out).This situation is particularly observed in Bali and Kumbo and to a lesser extent in Bafou, not that chiefs are less respected in Bafou but that there are lesser local extensive schemes. This means that, while access and use is massively improved for some, it is often made worse for others. We returned to this theme of access to water and conflicts to bring out the link between our literature and practical views on the field.

Before we proceed, we will base our reflection on the fact that social relations around water supply points in all three sites embody contradictory tendencies. While socials ties were enhanced in some sections or groups (such as those sharing common water points) of the communities, they often lead to a deterioration of this (social relations) in others. To substantiate this view we reconsider the case of Bafou where well owners and users exhibit closer ties than family ties. On the one hand, it is important to unravel the nature of social relationship that unfolds between individuals and proprietors structured through ownership. In other words, well possession is not independent from class, gender or other power struggles (maybe economic or political). On the other hand, we realize that even though individuals appreciate the generosity of their proprietors they express the wish of possessing their own wells. In Bafou still, management (rules guiding wells) depends largely on proprietors, there

is need to enhance the democratic process by identifying strategies for more equitable distribution of social power.

It is plainly extraordinary and something requiring explanation that in the abundant literature on water problems and "water crisis" relatively little if any attention is paid to one of the most trivial truths that is water to be closely linked with power. As mentioned in this section, only in very exceptional cases do powerful social groups of individuals lack access to water. The examples of Kumbo, Bali and Bafou illustrate that ownership of, or control over water and its distribution and allocation are formidable sources of social power. We observed that all social groups with sufficient social, political, economic or cultural power will never die of thirst. In the cases of Kumbo and Bali supplied by piped systems the quarters with the chiefs palace for example are the first served meanwhile in Bafou, the rich can conveniently pay for the services of wells which they use to gain control in their neighbourhood (See figure 25 below).

Figure 28: Zone of influence of an elite's water supply to his neighbours



Rapport Bafou, 2007

As illustrated above, there is need to explore the relationship between water and social power and the insights that can be derived from it. The vital question of course is to examine the various ways in which the socio-hydrological cycle has an impact not only on water management but that it is saturated with all types of power relations. We try to examine the

various forms of power that are remarkable within the water network in Bafou for example and how these, in turn, are at the bases of uneven social power relations including mechanisms of access to water and exclusion from access to water. Water needs to be harnessed transported, financed, all these by sophisticated "instruments". These instruments constitute the core and are the ones that express the various and multiple social power relations. These instruments can either be individuals, donors, NGOs etc. This means that effective management demands a good combination and or coordination of the interests and objectives of the different actors. We used Baron's (2003) analysis to back up this view. She puts forward that:

"*La gouvernance correspond à une forme intermédiaire, de type réseau, ce qui permet d'insister sur le rôle d'acteurs hétérogènes tant du point de vue de leurs modes de fonctionnement que de leurs objectifs, de leurs sources de légitimité et leurs relations au politique. On est face à une coordination qualifiée d'hétérarchie ou d'auto organisation. Ce type de coordination revêt trois formes différenciées : des réseaux interpersonnels, auto organisés basés sur la confiance et la réciprocité »*[69]

Kumbo , Bali and Bafou shared some common leaders like individuals or better still elites while others were quite varied depending on who or what intervened or still intervenes in the management of the water supplies. In Bafou, while the power was linked to well ownership, the situation was quite different in the Kumbo and Bafou. The influence of individuals in the water supplies depended on two main reasons; firstly on their positions occupied in the society, both nationally and locally. And secondly, their contributions to the realization of the schemes in these communities where the political and social organization is characterized by "despotic" ruling divine chiefs, surrounded by an elite stratum of nobles, secret societies to maintain territorial integrity and a peasant population, there is that possibility of exercising a centralized control and organization as was the case in Kumbo and Bali. Although the description seems to be sophisticated with these forms of social organization with an all powerful political elite and a disempowered and politically excluded peasantry we cannot isolate water management from authoritarian socio-political individuals.

[69] Baron C. (2003), La gouvernance: débats autour d'un concept polysémique. In Droit et Société 54/2003, pp 329-351.

These and many other examples illustrate that water and social power are indeed closely intertwined. I do not suggest that hydro-social configurations are centrally constructed through political and social power and conflict, configurations that produce simultaneously regimes of access and exclusion. Nevertheless engineering practices, technological system, and political regimes are not socially neutral. They embody particular social and economic visions, are associated with social elite formation and are virtually important arenas for gaining or maintaining social power.

However we also realized that the Kumbo and Bali water systems that required a detailed technical and social division of labour and sophisticated management structures are accompanied by large, hierarchically organized, bureaucratic organizations whose top members have considerable political and social power and networks with other centres of private and or state power.

This complex question of ownership, access to water as analyzed in our literature is closely linked to the fragmented nature of the water regime in Cameroon. The relationship between the state on the one hand and water access and water rights on the other is much broader than the question about ownership, public policy or management. As the above already suggested, there has been historically a close connection between the state and the dynamics of water though with blurry roles of actors. Here we exemplify how development models, state policies and social power relations become reflected and perceived through management of water community supplies. The case studies of Bali and Kumbo will illustrate how societies can reject/oppose state developmental strategies and impose their views.

We recall that in the literature on conflicts in water management we regrouped the causes of conflicts into two main headings; conflicts of interest and conflicts as a result of power. In this section of our work, we thought it will be rather impossible to identify all the possible conflicts in each case as we observed, but rather regroup them under the two main causes and site examples in everyone case. Nevertheless, all striking cases will be mentioned and analyzed in details within the context of whether the final reaction of the people was based on social, economic or political grounds. On the one hand disagreements could also be classified into internal; amongst members of the same community, the community at large against the management (the management board and its official partners be them NGOs or municipalities) and communities with the chieftaincy(the use of the word chieftaincy here is

as defined in the literature by Nyamnjoh) or elites. On the other hand conflicts can be said to be external (between communities and the state) while using water supplies as arenas as will be illustrated subsequently.

Conflicts amongst members of the same community could be around stand taps or boreholes (in the case of Bafou) in the sharing of bills and application of maintenance rules. Meanwhile, in the case of stand taps, recalcitrant fellows can be reported to the General Assembly, well proprietors in Bafou can simply send away individuals who do not abide to their rules. Going beyond individuals, communities at large can disagree with the management with increases in water prices in cases where they were not consulted. In addition, around catchment sites between landowners who ceded their lands for catchment protection and frequently return especially when they are not contented with the management strategies.

Meanwhile when we talk of intercommunity conflicts, we are not referring to conflicts between communities directly related to water. Rather water points serve as strategic points to be attacked during inter-tribal wars. Secondly, inter community disagreements can hinder effective water governance. This idea has been better analyzed in subsequent chapters with concrete examples. However, there exist a third level of conflict that can be between communities and the state. After analyzing the relationship between social power and water, we shall then consider the relationship between the state and water management. Considering the fact that the state should always play its role as the regulator, we seek to understand the role of the state in destabilizing this social framework which encourages inequality. The subsection that follows shows confrontations between communities and the state.

5.5 Community Water supplies as arena for expressing political grievances

The introduction of modernity in Africa has resulted in the transformation of intercommunity relations. It has also set in motion new forms of competition for prestige, power and position among communities, as well as new forms of co-operation through politics. Such relations have generally tended to contradict the demands of modern universalistic principles contained in the nation building project. This has thus led to a crisis of modernization as local political elites try to grapple with the demands of a modern setting while also trying to stick to their essential communal identity. This has become evident in the political arena with chiefs (and

other political elites) forcing their way into national politics while also clinging to their traditional stools.

The impact of this competition for power is exercised over resources (water, scarce land, and boundaries), positions of pre-eminence and the delineation of administrative units. The introduction of democracy in Cameroon in 1990 created conditions for the return of old political actors such as chiefs to the national political scene. But the question that arises in this section is: can the action of chiefs and other intermediaries be based on protecting their community or rather on their personal interests? These questions could find their answers when one analyses the involvement of the different chiefs in national politics and especially chiefs in the regions studied in this work. This section seeks to examine how the concept of community organization or communal identity in the North West Cameroon has influenced the relations between local communities on the one hand, party politics and the influence in the management of local water supplies.

It is obvious that the planning, building and maintenance of potable water supplies are closely related to important social processes in which communities members are engaged. Taking local Drinking Water Project (DWP) as a starting point for the observation of the main social processes related to it, it can be noticed that they have a political, economic, social and cultural dimension. The territorial core-space in which these processes develop are small towns and village areas where the drinking water supplies are found. The still very strong traditional village organization is in turn only part of a culturally and historically shaped long-term development where the institutions of the *Fondom*[70] play the major role. In territorial terms, the Fondoms can embrace non-continuous spaces. At the same time, the fondoms are also forming part of a great number of "modern" organizations that have their origins in different periods of the pre-colonial and colonial history.

The introduction of the democratic process (through multipartism) in Cameroon in 1990 gave way for the appearance of political actors like chiefs or *fons* to the national political scene. The central question was how competent would these chiefs be in national politics while maintaining their local confidence towards their people. In many cases chiefs attempted to the two, claiming they were divine rulers seeking the good of their people. This dichotomy could

[70] The fondom is used in our local context to refer to the area over which the fon reigns. This area is popularly referred to as chiefdom or kingdom.

be illustrated by the struggle over the community water supply in Bali and Kumbo. According to informants, while the water crises in Kumbo and Bali could be linked to incompetence of the management framework, there is also no doubt that the real problem of the water supplies is directly related to SNEC management and the unstable political atmosphere.

5.5.1 The political atmosphere in Cameroon in relation to the management of local water supplies

The present situation in the political domain can be summarized as the search for a progressive emancipation of villagers and their organizations from the tutelage on the part of the central, regional and local government structures. The process takes place in a contradictory political environment: firstly, there is a still severe economic crisis and a drastic structural adjustment. The economic crisis of Cameroon in the1980s, the dictated structural adjustment measures, drastic salary cut of 50 percent constitute one of the main reasons for the widespread corruption in Cameroon. Secondly, this resulted in a significant weakening of public administration, meaning that less pressure is exercised on the towns. This facilitated the emergence of a strong opposition led by the Social Democratic Front party (SDF), which is particularly dominant in the North West Region of Cameroon.

The retreat of the public sector in education, health and infrastructure construction and maintenance was mainly compensated through village-based efforts investing more time, energy, natural and economic resources in the satisfaction of these basic needs. Consequently, the existing space for self-help and community autonomy increased significantly, although at a rather high price.

The people in the towns relate the political and economic crisis directly to the problems they face regarding the management of the community water supplies. Firstly, they argue that the homecoming of mainly young people from larger urban centres (due to unemployment) combined with the general growth of population led to an increasing demand for drinking water. In the two towns (Kumbo and Bali), therefore, the actual water supply problem is crucial which manifests in the constant change in the management modes, from community to state and the council. This situation is aggravated by the fact that the pipe borne water systems are having some technical deficiencies due to their high age of more than 40 years (Kumbo 41

years and Bali 54). This results in a deficient water supply in terms of access, quantity, quality and constancy. Incomplete water supply and growing inequity regarding access to standpipes is a great disadvantage for a community-based management system. These conditions hinder the towns to consider the water supplies as a public good at the community level, making it difficult to be managed according to the existing ethical norms and social practices.

In this perspective, it is clear that the solution cannot be based on the self-help capacity of the population only. They therefore activate the already proven and successfully applied strategy in the construction phase of the existing water supplies, consisting in the creation of temporal and reciprocity-based alliances with external institutions. In the present situation, faced with the management challenges, the towns saw the management of their water supplies which were in the hand of the state owned agency as the cause of their problems. Coupled with the political discontent in the 1990s the water supplies in these two settings served as arenas for expressing the pessimism of the people against the state as we will be illustrating in our next section.

5.5.2 Local politics versus the community organization: A source of division

The interference of politics in the management of community water supplies is what Rist (2001) calls the "political emancipation" and is termed by Fokwang (2003) as "politics of tradition". According to them, it is that local fight by elites to figure in national politics which gives them powers to govern over others. What we deduce from their analysis is the rise of civil society and the fight for their rights under an atmosphere of general socio-economic and political discontent. This situation as illustrated in the preceding sections is particularly beneficial to chiefs who are in between assuming their traditional titles and walking into the corridors of power nationally.

The installation and operation of local water facilities has led to increased interaction between the state through councils and villages resulting in greater cooperation or disparities. Experience with drinking water supplies also increased the villages capacity to negotiate independently (as was the case in Kumbo) when dealing with donors and political parties. However, taking into account the communities' perception of social organization, it becomes clear that the idea portrays a dual image. The increasing involvement of some individuals in politics is regarded as a forum for a complementary decision making. Meanwhile others view

it as a potential area of conflict between traditional and formally "democratic" systems of representation that need to be monitored.

An understanding of the revolting behaviour of the population can be seen in Helen Fulcher's (1989) definition of the concept of community. We are particularly interested in her definition to the political dimension of community as analyzed in part two. The political dimension involves both subjective and objective aspects. She emphasizes on the subjective interpretation with regard to people's perceptions in identifying the area to which they feel they belong. A community can be said to exist where people feel an affinity or compatibility with the area and the people who live there. They see each other as having like interests and value systems and often equate that sense of identity with the "local" in local government. In this light the resistant reaction of the people of Bali and Kumbo can be attributed to the fact that they feel betrayed by their members (precisely their divine leaders) involved in politics and creating other attachments with different interests. She further emphasizes that "local governments should act as the voice of local opinion. That voice should be representative of all the people who use and/or contribute to the facilities and services provided. It must be able to reconcile differing interests, which will require public confidence in its leadership.

The traditional organization in Kumbo and Bali is clearly based on reciprocity (see for example "*njangi*" in agriculture, house building, saving and many other forms of social co-operation). The decisive element of reciprocity is the people's recognition that most of their own needs cannot be satisfied efficiently based only on their own capacities and resources. The interacting partners therefore establish forms of mutual co-operation based on the "exchange" of gifts and counter-gifts that are beneficial for all the actors involved.

Apart from this practical aspect, reciprocity implies a dialectical relation between material and social goods. As a social good of high importance for every community member we found what could be called the "social prestige". This is the basis for someone who wants to become leader in the community for instance. The Fai of Yer[71] expresses what it means to earn "social prestige" . To him "*in order to become a leader there is need to defend the people's interest in turn you gain their respect*". Meanwhile, it is difficult to play this intermediary role to please

[71] The head of a small chiefdom within Nso'o

communities as well as the State, in the heart of an economic and socio-political crisis era where everyone was fighting for survival.

Over the years, the political climate in Cameroon has changed considerably in relation to people's expectations about democracy. Since the early 90s after the 1997 presidential elections which was boycotted by the main opposition party (SDF) the civil society gradually realized that their aspirations for a change of power was not to be in the near future. The SDF lost its popularity meaning that most chiefs and the opposition political elites crossed-carpeted while others overtly renounced their neutrality. In the following paragraphs I will consider the *fons'* role in each of the different events and assess the extent to which he gained or lost popularity.

5.5.3 Local water supplies potential devices in the search for political emancipation

Following the two cases, people highly prioritize the establishment of an internal-external relationship of reciprocity between towns and foreign donors rather than the State. They relate this option to the political process of emancipation, explaining that local councils have been invaded with people belonging to parties and not representing the peoples' interests. In both towns, people were less enthusiastic about the possibility to expect some support from the state through councils. Their rather pessimistic attitudes towards the councils (the State) are due to the low credibility resulting from negative experiences of the past years.

This can be understood as a consequence of the still clearly prevailing, historically justified ambiguity of the village organization towards the public administration. In the two towns where the trust in a closer co-operation with the councils is questioned, they obviously favoured the co-operation with Helvetas or other non-governmental organizations (NGOs), to which, at the utmost, some collaboration with the public administration can be added. This pattern of institutional setting was revealed in the case of Kumbo with Global Water Partnership Cameroon as the third party. Even if they give greater chances to receiving co-operation from the council, in any case they plan to engage NGOs also. In this light, it became evident that this way of approaching the extension and reconstruction of the existing community water supplies is the expression of a strategic reasoning where the maintenance of the villages' autonomy is a major factor.

The history of the building process of drinking water supplies systematically showed the same institutional patterns. On several occasions, people pointed out that this way of working together with the public administration and NGOs was very favourable to achieve a higher degree of autonomy in steering the process according to their own principles of development.

An additional argument for this trilateral scheme of co-operation was that it better valued the villagers' own contributions in cash and kind: the difference between their contribution and the contribution of the other two partners was less important than it would have been with only one partner. The trilateral solution was also mentioned as a mechanism that allowed a better control over the generalized corruption of the public administration, because the additional "private eye" (of Helvetas) was a further guarantee for a more transparent management of the funds than in the case of a bilateral co-operation.

An additional element from the villagers' point of view that significantly limits their trust in the potentials of co-operation between villages and state structures is the fact that the state through councils and state owned agencies are spaces of "amputated" autonomy. Although they are democratically legitimized, the District Officer (DO), who is not elected but appointed by the Central Government, can veto all plans and budgets of the council. As long as this structural obstacle (of the DO) exists, the risk of a politically motivated interference is latently hindering the people to develop a certain confidence in this potentially important platform of social and political organization.

Another problem the community organization is facing regarding the best way to relate to the recently re-conquered platform of councils is the conflicting relation between the traditional community and the formal democratic organization (as used to elect the members and the Mayor of the councils). According to the political constitution, the Mayor, because of his democratic legitimization, is the "head" of all the villages forming the councils. Nevertheless, according to the perception of the people, the *Fon* is the only person who can be considered "head" of the village. This leads to complicated and potentially conflictive relations between "modern" and traditional forms of organization. The Mayor of the Tubah Rural Council gives some important hints on how they try to resolve the mentioned complications when he explained:

"*The Rural Council is not isolated from the traditional organization. From every village we have elected some members of the traditional council. For me as Mayor, this is not a*

disadvantage because when we have to decide on something, they are obliged to first discuss it with the Fon and other traditional rulers. When they then come back and agree to a certain project, I already know that it was approved by the traditional organization. This gives me the security that the project can count on the support of the community, because without this support, no project can be really successful. As a Mayor, I am not the 'head' of the communities and I only have the task to bring them together so that we can join our efforts, because together we can achieve more than when we walk separately. But I could never think of myself to be higher than a Fon, because when I go to my community I always will respect him as my authority." (Rist, 2001, p 24)[72]

This testimony shows an understanding which reflects the opinion of many other local authorities and common persons that were met in the two villages and therefore seems to be a consented basis of understanding. The *Fon* of Bambui, asked about his vision of the role of the Rural Council, answered as follows:

"*Well, first of all, people foresaw that at a higher level in the Rural Council, some notables (members of the traditional council) should be there, because they will understand better the problems that come from the grassroots; for that level, they can talk easily. But, you know, it doesn't need many people to think for solutions. For that it's enough to have just a few people who have a cool head and together they are the representation of our people. In every quarter, they always have a representative and some of those representatives now are voted into the Rural Council. Like that it is always worked out in a balanced way. That's the way how we do it."*(Rist, 2001, p 25)[73]

The participation in Rural Councils is conceived as an additional and complementary strategy with the objective to occupy existing political spaces in order to achieve better conditions for a life based on village autonomy and a high degree of self-determination regarding the social and political organization. Instead of trying to overcome the limitations of the traditional organization by replacing it, the participation in "modern" forms of organization is understood as part of a process of innovation and consolidation of a social organization that is clearly committed to their own cultural identity with, at its core, the traditional organization.

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[72] If this Drinking water system fails, then the whole community is a failure...": Social processes and drinking water systems- Insights from a learning society, 82p
[73] ibid

In this perspective, it becomes clear that the councils are perceived as platforms on which different autonomously organized villages can meet in order to search for solutions to problems that they cannot resolve on their own. In relation to community water supplies, the villages of Bali and Kumbo successfully illustrated that this potential can be exploited very effectively for the improvement of the generally insufficient efforts undertaken to achieve an optimal watershed protection. In view of the fact that many watersheds are public goods used by different communities, the platforms of the councils proved to be an adequate space for the re-negotiation of the resource management system of these areas. This leads to the protection of the watersheds, which are important means to maintain or even increase the present water flow.

This specific way of relating traditional and "modern" forms of organization is also consistent with what was observed in relation to these patterns of interaction with Village Development Committees, Project Development Committees (which are formed temporally, e.g. for the process of realizing a local water supply), Water Maintenance Committees, co-operatives, youth and football clubs or religious groups. A common characteristic of these "modern" institutions is that they cannot subsist without having some relations with the traditional organization.

The opposition party (SDF) represents a slightly different vision. It considers the Council as an alternative arena for local politics, beyond the present forms of traditional or public administration. By overemphasizing the existing abuse committed by some *fons* and by emphasizing the maltreatment at the hands of the present public administration, its leader states that:

"*We believe in democratic culture that should give peace and justice to the people, so that they don't have to suffer the human rights abuses from the chiefs, nor the flagrant abuses from the men of the public administration*." (SDO Kumbo, 2010)

This statement shows a possible conflict with the local way of dealing with the local Councils. If they understand their function as an alternative to the village-based organization instead of a reinforcement of the same, the local councils could rapidly lose the support they have.

5. 5. 4 Civil Society Strategies to fight against marginalization

This section reflects on the traditional organization adopted after Kumbo, Bali and even Tombel water supplies were reclaimed by their various communities in 1991. The communities after regaining control went ahead to create autonomous management organs which still exist in the case of Bali. We reflect on the after "war period" in both communities and raised some primary question. Could these (or did these) organizational changes and new assigned roles to community members lead to a better administration of the schemes? At first sight, these functional changes only generated further socio-political tension, no radical change in the system management rather it reinforced the powers of elites[74]. Moreover, can the 1990/1991 protest actions of the communities be considered illegal or legitimate? First we are tempted to acknowledge that the reclamation of the scheme by the community is embraced by elites resident in the community who use management as yet another forum to control and suppress. As for the external elites, they solidify their positions by contributing in the community's development in exchange for their votes in return during municipal and legislative elections for example.

These systems were not given priority by the local municipal authority because the water associations operate under illegal status[75]. Since the period of separation (1991-2008) of the water scheme from state management (SNEC) there was a break up in the relationship and dialogue. The water management organs were responsible for the planning and implementation as well as sanitation without the municipal plan.

These water supplies have undergone political dynamics. The separation from the state gave room for local political elites to step into the political scene while haven gained popularity from their local development schemes like water. These elites do not only perform their new political duties but try to respect some old customs in water management, thus there is an overlapping of functions. Water management organs operate under the double pressure of

[74] The powers of elites here will refer to the definitions of Beard and Phakphian (2009), elites are: "individuals who can exert *disproportionate* influence over a collective action process" most of the benefits. In explaining elite domination, Platteau (2004) suggests **four** factors: disparate access to economic resources, asymmetrical social positions, varying levels of knowledge of political protocols, and different education attainment in some cases (p. 223).

[75] After the Kumbo, Bali and Tombel population manifested and reclaimed their water supplies they were considered as operating illegally. To solve this problem the state issued a degree in 2008 placing the management of all water supplies under municipalities. Although this is yet to be achieved, some communities have been convinced of a better co-management with their municipalities like Kumbo.

water provision and power interests. The relationship between these organizations is politically complex. The complexity underlying the power interests and relations we affirm that are the bases of the different conflicts we identify. The different cases we will evoke to illustrate this view will tell us the particular interests of whom or those portraying them.

Even though elites or chieftaincy (as analysed in this study, as the chief and his entourage) are found in between serving the community and the state, the community members are quite aware of their egoistic functions. They are ready to use organized social groups to curtail the powers of these groups of people. It is necessary to observe how the society can form and use extreme tools to destabilize suppression.

In general, attempts to empower civil society in Cameroon have yielded little fruit. And this is true regardless of what aspect of society we look at. If one were to talk of successes by the opposition (party) and civil society in terms of aspirations for local water supplies (freedom and democracy), one could argue that their difficulties with laws and government action offer little opportunity to Cameroonians to open up and give society a chance to move forward. And that is an invaluable contribution. From what precedes, it is apparent that the democratic process in Cameroon has stalled, and that opposition parties and other sections of civil society, seem rather slow of coming up with workable solutions to the current disillusionment. Yet it is curious that opposition parties and other associations have failed to capitalize (in a positive way) on the widespread inclination at the grassroots towards a more democratic social and political order.

Surveys and undoctored election results have repeatedly left little doubt that the bulk of Cameroonians want a change for the better. They want to have an active say in matters of public interest, and to free themselves of the misery of which they are victims. When you converse with them as individuals that is unmistakably the impression you are given. But then, what is it that stops them from pursuing their aspirations in an organized and sustained manner, with or without violence? How come their actions (when and if they act) have often bore long term fruits.

The interest of the above section was to apply the concept of civil society as conceptualized in part two of this study. The concept of civil society has acquired different meanings and has been used to different ends, we used it to examine relations between different actors as well as

their structure and function. Secondly and more importantly are the different actions of the society to challenge existing power relations between society organizations and state institutions, the role they play in water service delivery, criticism and the extent of these relations. The ability of civil society to challenge established state powers, the main question and which we will take the case of Tombel to illustrate is on how the society organizes its social movements to demand for the application of democracy and equity. The radical actions of the social organizations or movements seek to balance the excesses of established power.

Box 9: The case of Tombel to illustrate other manifestations of discontentment of communities

Tombel is a small town found in the South West region of Cameroon and constitutes one of the two anglophone regions in Cameroon. The Tombel community water supply was constructed in 1963. It follows the same evolution of suburban and urban water supplies in Cameroon constructed during and after the colonial period. The community contributed in cash and in kind while the government also gave a reasonable amount of money for the completion of the project. After the construction, the water supply was placed under the supervision of the Public Works Department and later on under SNEC (Société Nationale des Eaux du Cameroun). SNEC was the parastatal company that had to manage water supplies in urban areas for a forty year period.

From 1990-1992, the Tombel population just like the Kumbo and Bali saw their water prices to be extremely high. Although women seem to be the minor participants in the control of water points they have often made manifestations in view of demand changes. Using cultural values and historical forms of protest women can impose their demands.

They demanded that SNEC leave Tombel and that purification installations carried out in the early 1980s be disconnected and replaced by the system constructed in 1963. Even though the SNEC system was more efficient; the women continued their protest and went further to start clearing the former site (community water supply in 1963). After two weeks of no response from the SNEC nor the government, 4 000 women took to the streets of Tombel and matched to the SNEC office, surrounded and carried out traditional rites. At the front of the crowd, some old women matched naked[76] and once they reached the SNEC office, they urinated at the entrance. All the men in Tombel were in the hiding so as not to see these naked women. The SNEC workers who had earlier been

[76] In the Western Highlands of Cameroon, a woman's body is considered as secret and women are given great respect as child bearers with the different parts of the body that facilitate this act. Normally the woman's private should only be seen by the husband, traditional midwives and nurses who helped women in child bearing. Today in addition to this set of people are medical doctors. It is therefore unheard of or unusual to see a woman naked especially in the streets. There exist three parts of the woman's body (the breast, which they believe is the first source of food, the private; the route to life and the womb; the cradle) that could be used for self defense. Since this part of Cameroon still strongly believe in superstitions, they hold that the three parts could be a source of real curse to he who sees it if provoked. It is implored actually as a last resort and even the boldest armed forces have not been able to withstand the presence of the old women who naked themselves as counter power. Since this is reserved only to women of post menopause.

informed, fled from the office and never returned. Partly their reason was that the working conditions were not conducive but the real reason was to stay away from the curses if they crossed the urine. After expelling SNEC form the town, the women handed the management of the water system to the community committee.

This method of rioting is not only reserved to demands to a democratic water management strategy. It was also implored in the North west region during the period of political unrest in Cameroon in 1992. After the first democratic elections in Cameroon, the opposition accused the ruling party of rigging the elections, opposition took the lead in protest. Armed forces were sent to control and restore tranquility. The forces reacted with extreme violence by molesting and killing of civilians. The only remedy to this act to curb the powers of the military was the use of naked power of the old women who occupied major junctions for many months and prevented military from getting to the manifesting crowd. The only weapon they had was their private parts. Whenever they heard the armed forces were coming they fell down and naked themselves and they soldiers will runaway. They finally occupied all the main junctions in town and protected the youths who were striking.

I had a talk with a soldier who was part of troop that was sent to the North West region during the 1990 political upheavals. I asked his opinion concerning the naked women (takenbeng). My intension was to see his reaction if he was to confront a crown that was "protected" by the *"takenbeng*". And he replied

« … Je préfère affronter une armée que d'affronter ces femmes là; ou je préfère déposer mes armes…non je ne peux pas voir « des trucs » de ces grandes mères, ma grande mère…ce sont des malédictions terribles, déposer mes armes ou affronter ces femmes là, ça revient au même, je ne pourrai plus vivre normalement… »

Their protests can neither be considered illegal nor legitimate. This is because the water supplies are only used as entry points to express further demands. If we were to consider the society's demands to reclaim water schemes, we will readily consider their action as illegal. On the other hand, taking into consideration the fact that the society only uses water supplies to express complex socio-political and economic claims, their actions can be considered legitimate.

The case studies in this section largely reflect community-based movements in urban neighbourhoods that mobilize (temporarily and permanently) to resist, confront or deal with a crisis. Thus, we are interested in communities that can be made through crisis. We are therefore more interested in communities which are more vulnerable and oppressed, materially and non materially, and who engage in collective action to contest and intervene to change their situation. Our understanding of crisis initially emerged from concerns over the effects of water prices, but understood in a longer term context of restructuring since the

economic crisis in the mid 1980s and political crisis of the early 1990s. These two situations (economic and political crises) were associated with neoliberal economic policies, deregulation and marginalization of communities. We see "crises" (the economic, political or water crisis) as inherent and complex moments in the current social system, and these crises create cracks which communities can use to find political opportunities for action or which stimulate a movement to separate from the mainstream system as illustrated in the Kumbo, Bali and Tombel cases. Our understanding of crisis involves the following ideas: crises are multiple and overlapping (including economic, environmental, political and social issues etc), single and synchronous in time; occurring at multiple times and rhythms; existing at multiple geographical scales; and have complex and chaotic characteristics such as uncertainty.

Community responses to crisis have complex and multiple long, medium and short-term origins, often lacking simple cause and effect relations as illustrated throughout this chapter. We found a number of specific triggers relating to the contemporary situation that are acting as mobilizing factors. In particular, a feeling of a loss of control was a significant mobilizing factor relating to the loss of land, resources, services or a facility, as well as in terms of political influence. It is likely that these kinds of triggers will increase as financial austerity deepens. To achieve a better understanding of how community responses to crises and what they try to achieve, wider structural causes as well as more short term issues and immediate trigger points need to be comprehended. While many origins were based on single issues that acted as a catalyst, our cases show that a set of broader and interconnected issues normally emerge and broader values get discussed relating to dignity, equality and justice.

Conclusion

This section examined how community organization or identity in the Western Highland region of Cameroon has influenced the relations between local communities on the one hand, politics and the influence in the management of local water supplies. The specific objective was to describe the practice of party politics in the areas under study, to describe local reactions to party politics (the state) and to analyze the impact of local politics in the management of local water supplies. It enabled us to relate this to the concept of community. The argument we wish to make here is that communities can react very violently to local politics (the state) while using drinking water supplies as a device. We attribute this to the complexity of the historical process and national policies, which both pretended to take into account local realities and brutally ignored these when they did not tie in with metropolitan interests.

Closely connected to the discussions and strategies about the best way for small towns to relate to public administration and NGOs is the question on how to link politics with the existing internal (local) social and political community organization. One major preoccupation arises from the contradiction that people see between, political change in the community and national levels, and their objective to avoid the politicization and the related danger of fragmentation of the village organization. According to the villagers, politics and community organization should not be mixed. In any case they show their preference in terms of possible partnerships that could be applied in managing water schemes as we will be examining in the next chapter.

CHAPTER 6

WHICH PARTNERSHIP METHOD FOR CAMEROONIAN COMMUNITIES? The Public-Community model?

Introduction

In the preceding chapter we have been dealing with the socio-political situation of the three different cases. This chapter introduces the water management scenario in the Western Highlands and elaborates on the government's efforts to promote community-based water management to combat water problems. It then goes on to discuss the governance crisis in Cameroon by throwing light on government policies, measures and projects initiated to tackle drinking water problems, and how far they are effective and ineffective in managing water resources. Finally, the chapter discusses factors such as the link between socio-political crisis and power relations, which affect water governance, and argues that water governance in the Western Highlands and Cameroon in general is influenced by socio-political, institutional and ecological factors, rather than just being a policy matter.

Thus, in this chapter, special attention will be paid to the good governance issue, trying to get to know in depth what effective water management is, taking into consideration that what makes governance effective can differ from context to context and depends on cultural, economic, social and political settings. In this context several questions are formulated and taking us back to the central questions of this study, like: "how are public authorities (e.g. municipalities) dealing with the challenge of learning to work with poor communities to deliver services?", a question that can be translated as: "which is the 'best option to empower people to develop a shared water management in cooperation with the public authorities?". Another question like: "how can donors cooperate with local government officials to help develop the will, skills and capacity to work with citizens?". It is not easy to give an appropriate answer because it is difficult to generalize about more effective approaches to water management when considering the diversities of cities.

Nevertheless, intending to give an answer, on the level of policy making, local communities have increasingly become the focal point on the development agenda. Much of the

competence of civil society organizations is found in their knowledge and within the local context, which are important in choosing appropriate solutions. So, due to the vital importance of user's participation within the "good water governance context", a part of this section will be dedicated to understand the complex issue of participation and a special emphasis will be paid to the ways and levels of user's participation. Due to the public nature of the water resource, good governance must refer to a good number of relationships – formal and informal – at different levels between the civil society and the state. Thus, water provision should be seen as a basic service where citizens and their social and economic organizations can play a role in the urban governance together with the government. Nevertheless, although it might be seen very difficult to achieve this in practice, is not at all impossible.

6.1 The hybrid governance model adopted in the study sites: the public-community approach

World Health Organization recommends that the key to sustainable water delivery is institutional support from communities. Local communities take over the tasks they consider best suited for them, such as checking water losses through community vigilance and social control, thereby helping to increase the revenue of water utilities. As elaborated in the preceding chapters, Public Community Participation (PCPs) in general have the unique advantage of using communities to balance the roles between public and private players, whilst reducing the role of the state to providing social protection. The Public Community Participation hybrid model apparently has been adopted by the Kumbo and Bali towns as a means to solve their water problems. It has only been adopted after decades of confusion from shift from state to pure community control then community control through an autonomous management board and user associations. Specifically, we will characterize the different forms or types of water (and sanitation) services provided for in Bali and Kumbo, highlight the public-community partnerships forged in the provision of services and the role of each partner, and draw some lessons which can be used in improving the said services and replicating them in other areas.

The "Kumbo/Bali model" is one of such partnership that has successfully harnessed the strengths of the public and the community to the fullest to improve the efficiency of water supply to community members following the 2008 decree putting all water projects under municipalities. This partnership was signed in the year 2008, involving the municipality and the Kumbo and Bali communities. The model is a community-driven approach that seeks to

define roles for both the municipality as a state organization and the community according to their relative strengths on a “best-suited to do” basis. Under an agreement, the municipality overseas all the activities of the management board and user association, who have the responsibility for retailing to community members and recovering tariffs for the full cost. Because the community plays such a large role in the management, it is able to make rules to protect its vulnerable members.

Both communities engaged in the partnership with the primary objective of improving public health through increased and equitable access to potable water. It also sees this relationship as a means to check business entrepreneurs like SNEC who, for nearly four decades, had controlled and influenced water services in the community to the utmost exclusion of the majority of community members from access to potable water. The municipality on the other hand was motivated by the promising potential of the arrangement to reduce the rate of unaccounted for water and to increase revenue through efficient distribution, billing and tariff collection. Notwithstanding some challenges, the partnership has grown strong, and both parties appear to be satisfied with the outcomes. An initiative that was primarily targeted at curbing a public health problem has turned into one that goes beyond just a local community, and is attracting wide attention as a viable approach to community participation in these sub urban water supplies. These case studies seek to assess the viability of the Kumbo/Bali Public-Community Partnerships, in addressing some of the most difficult problems confronting the provision of potable water services by the public sector today. The case studies describe the nature of the partnership that exists between the Kumbo/Bali communities and the state through their municipalities, as well as the roles and expectations of each party. Secondly it examines the actual and potential contribution of such a partnership to the improvement of service delivery in terms of efficiency, effectiveness, equity and financial sustainability. Finally, identify the challenges and constraints confronting this partnership, and implications of scaling up.

6.1.1 The Partnership: pace of process hampered by the legal environment

At this juncture, it is worth emphasizing that the word “hybrid” has been used in this study to designate three main ideas. While two out of the three are part of the discourse on this concept, the third describes the diversity of the three study sites. The word hybrid as conceived by water analysts denote firstly the possible combinations that communities can

create with other organizations (public or private). Secondly, it also denotes the different forms of community management as we observed in Kumbo and Bali (See figures 30 and 31 below). It is interesting to recall here that as mentioned in our introduction, we were particularly interested in the Bali and Kumbo schemes because of their evolution, consequently the different partners/management bodies they have had. The aim is to analyze the degree of success of the different partners.

Figure 29: Different community management hybrids that have existed in the Kumbo water supply since its creation in 1968, *(Ngefor G.S. 2014)*

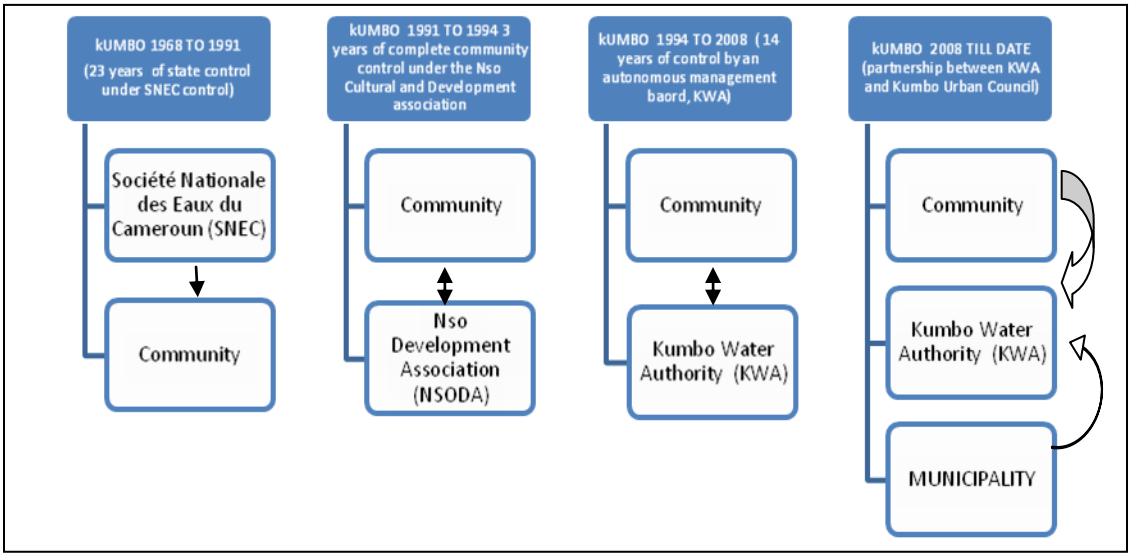
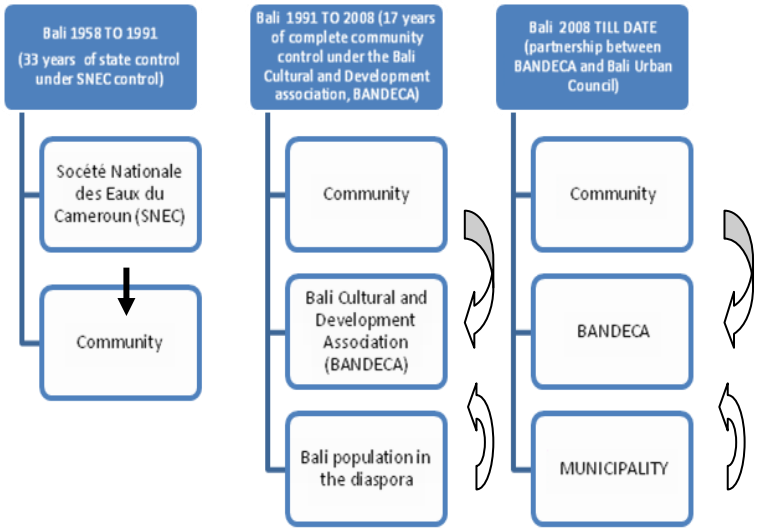


Figure 30: Different community hybrids that have existed in Bali since 1957 , (*Ngefor G.S., 2014*)



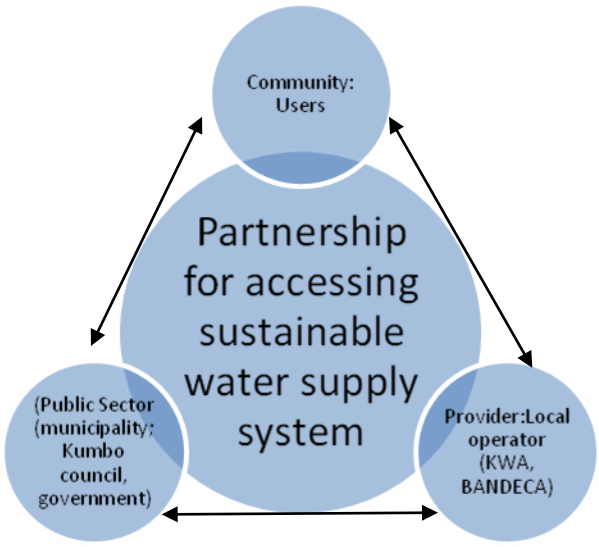
From figures 29 and 30 we can realize that both communities have attempted different hybrids of the community model. This section is in relation with the introductory part wherein we identified the different types of hybrids that do exist. We will recall that while Bali has gone through three visible stages, Kumbo has had 4. Both communities started off with a community/state partnership under SNEC which lasted 23 years for Kumbo and 33 years for Bali (Figure 29 and 30). After which both communities in 1991 took over the control of their systems and managed them as one of the development projects controlled by their various Village Development Associations. While this period was very brief in Kumbo (4 years) with the creation of an autonomous water management board it was only interrupted in Bali in 2008. Presently, the Kumbo and Bali Water Supply Systems are based on a partnership agreement forged between the community and the municipal councils since 2008. The partnership involves the joint production and the responsibility of retailing the water to members of the two communities, with the aim of having a full cost of water supplied (as summarized in fig 31 below). Clear roles for both parties, i.e. the communities and the councils, were defined, and the terms of the partnership were negotiated. The communities undertake to handle the distribution of water and collection of bills from its members (the households in this case), whilst the council partake in the administrative and technical assistance needed to delivers the water to the community. The price is also negotiated between the Water Board, the councils and the communities through its quarter representatives, taking into account commercial and domestic uses. Following the terms of the contact between the two partners:

-The councils and the water management bodies provide and redistribute treated water to the population of about 110,000 and 50,000 to Kumbo and Bali inhabitants respectively. The councils also provide consultancy services and on-site technical advice from time to time on matters related to the distribution of water.

Secondly, the council and water management bodies are obliged to provide and redistribute water daily and the inhabitants pay the full cost at the end of each month based on the amount of water supplied. Councils may carry out major repair works on the transmission within the system, and the community can provide labour and financial obligation in respect of the work done. In addition, the councils help in drawing plans and provide data and information for expansion and also provide consultancy services and technical support for job execution. Partnership meetings to review any modification in the agreement occur on regular bases.

Lastly, the councils endeavour to pay regularly for water consumed whilst the management boards sustain water supply in good pressure and flow, and of acceptable quality according to WHO standards. Where any party is unable to fulfill its part of the obligation, that party must explain the circumstances leading to the failure and recommend measures to address them.

Figure 31: Partnership agreement diagram showing Kumbo and Bali communities (*Ngefor G. S., 2014)*

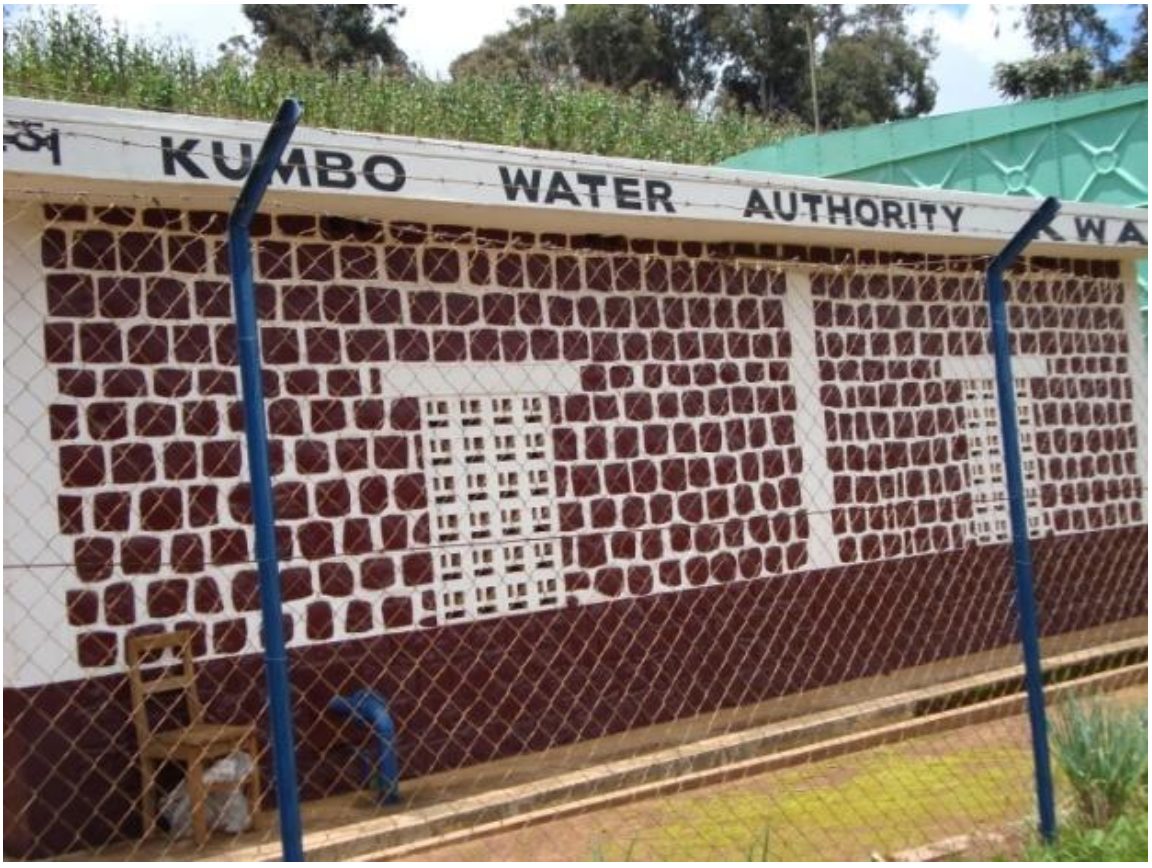


Although formally there exist a degree of redistribution of roles, some of the terms of the contract are hard to detect in practice while others are not respected. We can cite the case of accumulated non paid council bills (See figure 34) amounting to 2 241 450 FCFA (3422€). These rules are the bylaws put in place by the two parties in both communities but following what actually operates there is much to be done to meet up with these rules. An understanding of this difference we sought in the institutional framework of the water management board and association in collaboration with the council. To evaluate the relationship between the state and the different communities we proceeded by examining the management structures of the water schemes.

We recall that the organizational structures of the Kumbo and Bali water systems are quite different in that they are managed by an autonomous water board (Kumbo Water Authority, KWA) and management association (Bali Development and Cultural Association, BANDECA, (see plate 5) respectively. In both management models the community has been zoned for those supplied by public tap stands, and each has a Water and Sanitation Committee, led in Kumbo by women. The Water and Sanitation Committee at quarter levels

have overseers who ensure order and discipline, and a treasurer who receives money for water fetched from the tap stands.

Any community member selected to control sales at tap stands on a given day accounts to the treasurer at the end of the day. A liaison person on the committee reports faults and malfunctions of the water system to the management board.



Kumbo Water Authority water control Department (2011)

Kumbo Water Authority water control Department (2011)

Plate 5 : The Kumbo water purification station and tank (*Ngefor G. S., 2011*)

Aside private connections, there also exist in all three communities but specifically in Kumbo and Bali "water connections for poor[77] communities", public stand tap connections for 15 to about 45 households in some areas. In this type of water service, users form groups, register connections and share the cost for usage. Households either form the groupings by themselves or with the assistance of water authorities and quarter heads or area associations. Generally, the water authorities' staff had to assist or guide group formations and decision-making. The group is given one mother meter and while it is encouraged to install sub-meters to avoid problems with the sharing of cost, some household groups who are usually composed of relatives or close friends opted not to install sub meters to avoid incurring further costs of installing sub-meters. In each group, a leader is chosen who is then tasked with the collection for the group and payment to the management boards. To do this, upon receipt of the bill which is based on the main meter, the leader gets the individual sub-meter readings, shares and collects the bills.

This form of provision allows residents to organize, manage water distribution, and serve as a "local distribution net." The community organization with member households and individuals is however registered in the Water board accounts as regular connection. So, while this connection is technically bulk water supplying for a whole community, it is not charged the special rates for private connections. In both cases, there exist three main tariff rates (we will be elaborating on this on chapter 7). They include: private connections, those supplied by tap stands (what we term at times group taps) and commercial rates. In every case rates are calculated according to actual consumption per unit multiplied by the applicable tariff rates set for this particular connection. Rates are different in both communities.

Taking all the above factors into account, the bulk water rating in Bali presents the highest challenges. While it is destined to supply the poor population, the rates are considerably low (100FCFA as compared to 250FCFA for private connections), (1) it can be more costly and have higher investment requirements per service connection due to the technical and physical

[77] The main conclusions of the UN quantitative analysis nearly four out of every ten Cameroonians in 2001 were living with an annual income below the poverty line of CFAF 232,547 (roughly equivalent to US$1 per person, per day, or FCFA 19,000 per month). It also reveals that Cameroon's population perceives poverty as primarily a condition of material deprivation that is characterized by: (i) insufficient resources for meeting essential needs and (ii) poor access to basic infrastructure services such as water, roads, and electricity and to social services such as health and education. The population also perceives poverty as the result of a weakening social value system that translates in moral deprivations, loss of self-esteem, loosening family ties and a weakening sense of family solidarity, as well as widespread ethnic biases and social discrimination. Finally, the population also associates poverty with insecurity, a lack of protection against abuses, and a lack of basic rights and access to essential legal services.

difficulties of installations in depressed areas; (2) it can still be prone to illegal tappings; (3) households may not have as much incentive to report leaks and illegal tappings as in the other types where the financial burden is on the households; and (4) billing and collection can be difficult and dangerous around tap stands with many members.

Apart from these lowest level management units, there is the formal organizational framework which presents many differences in the two cases due to their approaches. We should recall that less attention will be paid to any one management, but instead our focus will be to evaluate the models simply as hybrids of the community driven models. What we can retain is that the Kumbo institutional framework seems to be more organized than Bali's because it is partitioned into four well structured departments. They include the water production department, customer services, network operation and the department of finances and administration. Each of these departments is headed by a chief of service (see fig 32).

The two project management boards (Kumbo Water Authority and BANDECA) are responsible for the day-to-day management of the system. They oversee the technical operations of the system and directly control the operations of the commissioned agents. Members of both committees are salaried workers, hired by the Water Board, and comprise in the case of Kumbo of a project manager, four chiefs of service in charge of the four departments alongside their respective teams. They keep books on the transactions of the project and can liaise directly with the council to discuss operational issues. Each department works with a small team.

The Kumbo and Bali schemes have General Assemblies representing all interest groups and quarters in the community headed by a Chairman (the mayor). The General Assembly is also made up of representatives from the Water and Sanitation Committees from all the quarters (see Figure 32), as well as representatives of other interest groups such as traditional authorities, religious leaders, etc. Nevertheless the representatives in Kumbo are elected at the quarter level. They are made up of the different tap stand leaders who in most cases are women. Kumbo has a clear list of the 21 quarter representatives made up of 17 women and twenty four men (see figure 34). The General Assembly oversees the operations of the project management board, and reports to the Council who is the state representative of the larger community. While all meetings in Kumbo are attended by both Kumbo Water Authority members and the mayor, on regular basis the situation in Bali was quite different. In brief it is hard to tell if the partnership in Bali will effectively take off.

Figure 32: The organigramme: Institutional structure of the Kumbo Water Authority

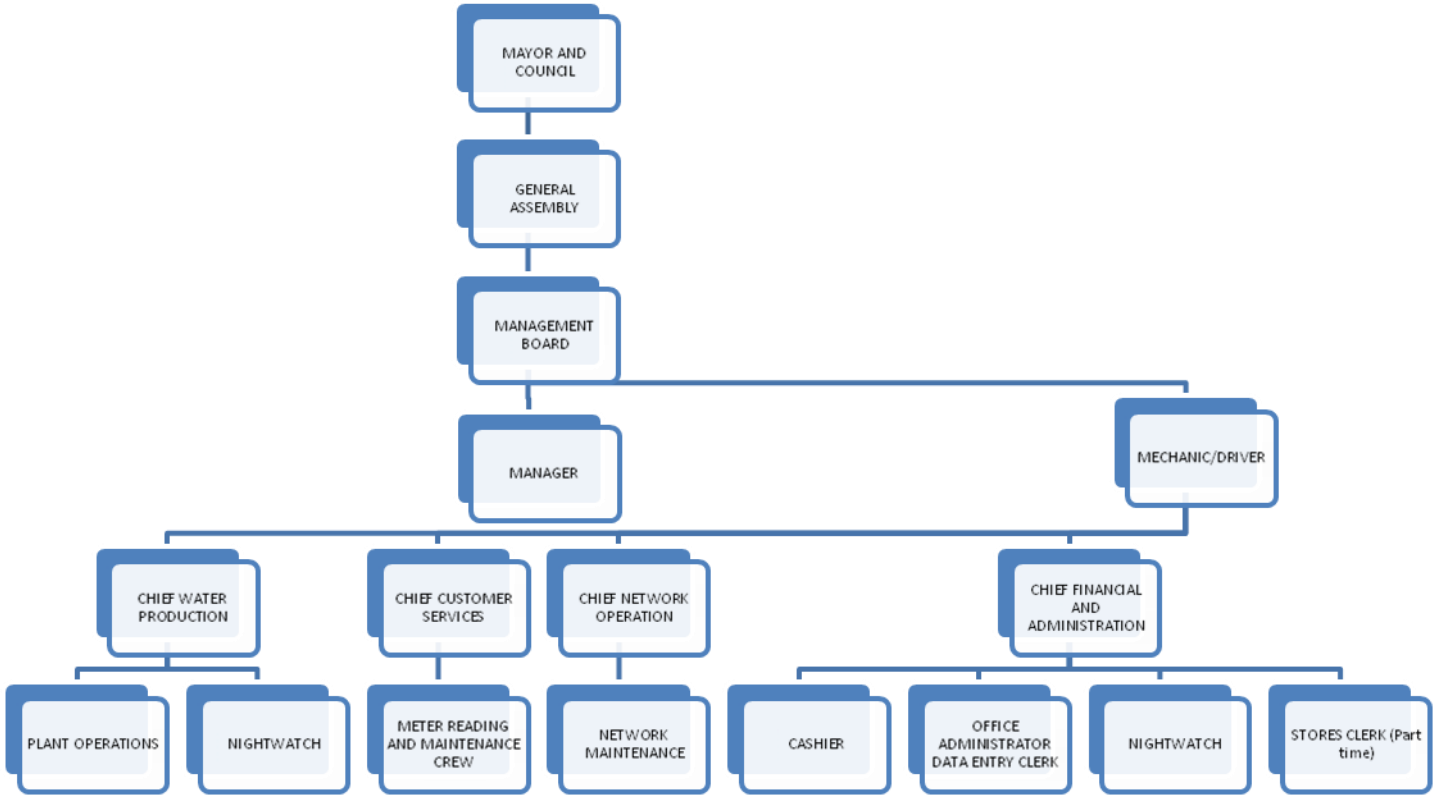
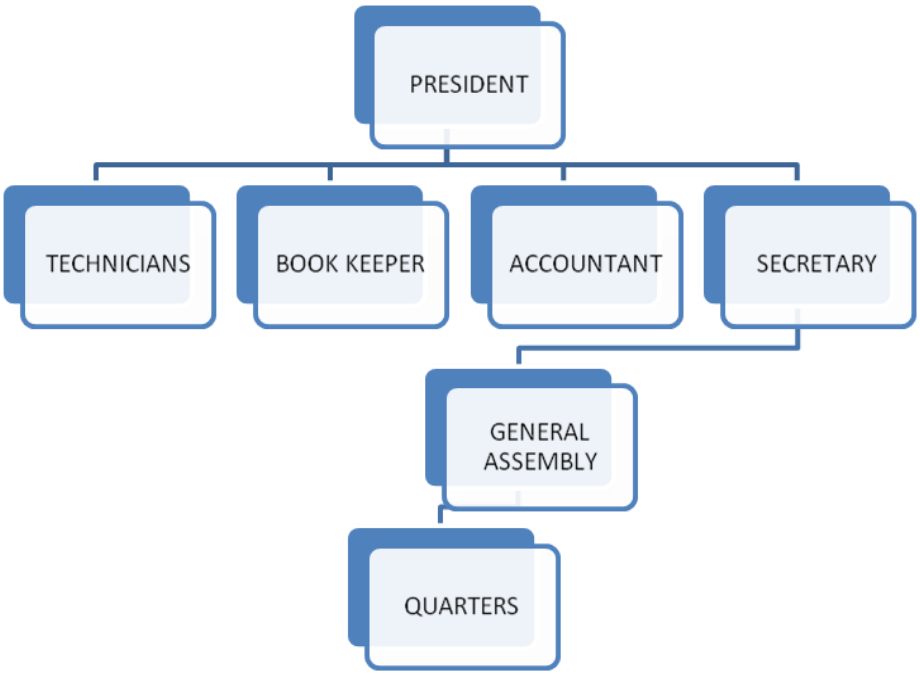


Figure 33: Institutional Framework of the Bali Water Supply



From figures 32 and 33 above we can identify differences between the water structures of Bali and Kumbo. From our observations we realized that while the Kumbo Water supply is trying hard to adapt a more state oriented partnership approach, the Bali is still reticent even though it has received and is still receiving much aid from the Cameroonian state.

The management board (in the case of Kumbo) and user association (Bali) are responsible for the day-to-day management of the systems. It has been empowered to take some decisions on behalf of the community, but these are limited to those related to technical and operational aspects. The Water Board together with the General Assembly takes major decisions, or approves proposals made by the management committee at tap stands. The governing or management board can take any major decision on behalf of the community regarding the project, except the setting and changing of tariffs. It is the sole responsibility of the General Assembly in collaboration with the council to set prices and tariffs. The General Assembly is a much broader representative body of the community and includes the vulnerable people as well.

Looking at both organigrammes there are many questions that arise drawn from both cases. Firstly, is the position of the General Assembly (representative of the population) respected? And secondly, is there actually a public/community partnership in Bali? Moreover viewing

the position of the General Assembly in Bali is it actually representative? We should note that we obtained both diagrammes from project offices as their official management framework. The Kumbo and Bali water schemes have both faced very difficult management periods. Though the bottom line of their resistances to state management was economic, we can also say that it was also linked to the feeling of exclusion of the populations of both towns. Since 1991 (when both towns reclaimed the management of their water schemes from state management), they have developed General Assemblies though with different successes. The essence is to let the population participate in decision making. Meanwhile what interest us is the positions and identified roles played by the General Assemblies in their respective towns.
If we take the case of the General Assembly in Kumbo, it is made up of quarter/ tap stand representatives and other influential people in the community. The Kumbo General assembly as seen on the figure comes before the management board (made up of four chiefs of services and their corresponding teams). Is that position respected? With these questions we will turn next to analyzing the community partnership model adopted in Kumbo and Bali.

6.1.2 Public/Community Reform

One of our reasons for choosing Kumbo and Bali was based on their evolution which could serve as ideal examples to evaluate the successes of the different community hybrids they have undergone. It will rather be interesting to draw conclusions on which partnership produced the best results. Was it the public community partnership with the domination of the parastatal company? Was it the period that the scheme was entirely under the community's' control or the present period with councils? The decree placing all community water supplies under municipal control was issued in June 2008. Although many villages are still hesitant in accepting this collaborative approach, the Kumbo water supply was forced to accept because it permitted it to obtain aid from the Canadian government. Following the managerial problems faced by the Kumbo water supply in the 1990s, the population manifested and reclaimed the scheme. Since 1991, with the effective take over by the community, it has had three management modes (see figures 29 and 30) with the 1992 to 1997 period (controlled by the village association) the most difficult as the project almost went bankrupt. All efforts made by the community to raise funds or seek financial aid were unsuccessful. The community came to know that the failure to obtain funds was solely as a result of the fact that the documents were usually signed by traditional heads that are not recognized by Western countries. In order to get aid from Canada which was willing to help, documents had to be

official, (that is signed by a recognized individual or institution), the Kumbo Water Authority agreed to sign a partnership with the Kumbo council. This was somehow difficult for the community who did not want anything to do again with the state. As the situation became critical, the community was convinced by the *fon* who called a general meeting and Global Water Partnership Cameroon.

We tried to evaluate the degree of success of the community/council partnership. We identified some aspects on which we based our reflection. Talking about the financial sustainability of the different projects takes us back to one of the secondary hypothesis we put forward in this study which goes that a one-hundred percent cost recovery is necessary or inevitable for an effective water management. Being a critical point in the management of community water supplies, the cases within this study were not an exception. The Kumbo and Bali water supplies are far from ensuring financial durability. Both projects almost went inoperational if external aid (external aid in this sense referring to aid outside the community contributions) was not provided from the Canadian government for Kumbo and the Cameroon government for Bali[78] (This aspect will be better analysed in the next section). In Bafou already almost all its mini water projects are out of function. The evolution of these water supply projects show that they have both undergone periods of near bankruptcy as a result of mismanagement which can be linked to the inability of reaching the best price levels. One of the greatest risks faced by the community is the misappropriation of funds.

The management boards in Bali and Kumbo should do well in terms of autonomy (such as setting tariffs and reinvestments in the water system). In practice, this autonomy it undermined when the water board lacks legitimacy[79] within the community and especially by the government. They are also subject to manipulation (during elections or appointment of the president in the case of Bali, the influence of the state, politics, the diaspora) by local political and social units, or traditional leadership. The interference of these set of people (local or central authorities) can have serious effects on the sustainability of the system.

[78] This aspect of external support to communities is analyzed in subsequent chapters where we bring out the relationship between all types of aid and project sustainability. This analysis is to take back our attention to the concept of reciprocity we mentioned in our literature.

[79] When we talk of projects or management boards lacking legitimacy we refer to the particular cases of Kumbo, Bali and all other water supplies that succeeded to reclaim management of their water systems from the state parastatal company and was operating "illegally"

We realize that the possibility of the authorities intervening in local management has reduced where management is now "separated" from the claws of the local elites (mainly in the case of Kumbo) and the joint management with the council. They can be by-passed in the day-to-day management, but when it comes to major decision making, they are inevitable. One will think that joint management methods (such as the public/community partnership adopted in Kumbo and Bali) together with improved financial accounting and auditing make it more difficult for irregularities to occur or for misappropriation of revenues and savings resulting from all types of pressure.

On the other hand, management boards need the support of local politicians in advocating institutional and legal changes. This can create an enabling environment for local entrepreneurs and or NGOs in setting and enforcing appropriate regulations. On the contrary, whilst the community members could rely on these politicians to defend their claims, the latter seem to enjoy this middleman role they play between the community and the state. It is then very difficult to exclude any one member. In this situation where every member seems to cling to his position, there are inevitable power struggles. We use the case of Bafou to reiterate the fact that elites sometimes are far from defending community's interest as they have carved out territories of domination and influence. The situation in these regions (especially the case of Bafou) is hard to define. There seem not to exist economic values in the water scene or the social relationship surrounding water access between individuals and "water owners" in Bafou is a complex one. Consequently, water objectives meet neither economic goals nor reinforce social ties. Concretely, disparities can be observed in allocation of the resources which produces forms of power which can be observed spatially. In this light figure 25 shows us the zone supplied by a Bafou elite who provides water to his neighbourhood.

Power which includes possessing portions of social and suburban space is apparent. In addition to our definition of power elaborated in the preceding sections of this work, we could enrich our analyses with the definition of Di Meo
"*le pouvoir, ce n'est pas seulement être en mésure de faire soi meme des choses, c'est aussi (et sans doute surtout) être capable de le faire faire par autrui"* (Di Meo, 2001).

This is what is observed in all power owners, expand his empire over others. At times in Bafou in the expansion process, we observed the superposition of powers influence or

spheres. It is rather amazing that since the dominated can hardly react because they cannot do otherwise, the water owners were hardly in good terms towards each other. This assumption was justified by the fact that the proprietors were actually fighting for space on the one hand and the people contained in that space on the other. The relationship between water proprietors was difficult to evaluate because they are not dependent or obliged to fetch water in the neighbourhood like the rest of the community their reserved attitude can also be explained by a non physical fight for space.

The relationship between power and water is observed differently in Kumbo and Bali. Very few individuals share their taps with neighbours; those who do not have private connections are supplied by the public stand taps. This does not mean that the power-water relationship is not apparent. It is expressed differently, unlike the case of Bafou where power is exercised by he who owns water, in Kumbo and Bali, power is seen in he who can directly or indirectly influence decision-making in the schemes. The influence in this case can be economically, socio-politically, by some local and national elites. Based on the economic support, in this case we could quote the example of the Bali elites at the national and international level that contribute huge sums for Bali development. They can influence or manipulate the population back home who is in between accepting decisions that don't favour them or loosing help. This brings us back to our theory on gifts and counter gifts, and reciprocity developed by Marcel Mauss (2007), Polanyi (1944) and Sabourin (2005).

Power whether exercised by an individual or a group of individuals gives the same socio-political results. What we observed is that whilst the dominating individuals' voices could have a strong impact on the national society, they cannot lure the government to install water supply points. This because of two main reasons; firstly calling on the government to provide water to their community members will alter their relationship with the state. This holds especially for those who have political careers and outstanding social positions. A good understanding of this reasoning has been developed in preceding parts of this study showing the difficulty of chiefs playing the double role of chiefs within their communities and state agents. Secondly, these individuals or group of individuals are reluctant to call on state intervention to solve drinking water problems because they fear of losing their zones of influence. This statement could be contradictory to the habitual situation where they put in every effort to "help" their community. For those who defend the notion of voluntary elites

ready to put in extra effort to serve their communities, elites have some good aspects but I believe the interaction of elites within a community it hard to define in the short run.

6.2 Using Price of services to evaluate public/community partnerships

Currently a meter cube of water, equivalent to 225 litres, costs a local equivalent of 285 and 250 FCFA that is €0.43 cents in Bali and €0.38 cents in Kumbo respectively. These prices are different for the different types of subscribers; that is those supplied by public tap stands, private connections and those using water for commercial purposes. In 1991, the same volume of water was costing the local equivalent of 200 FCFA (and 100FCFA by those supplied by public tap stands) in Kumbo and 250 FCFA in Bali (Table 15) . It is important to caution that an attempt to compare the cost of water in these communities before and after the reform is difficult and complicated for several reasons.

First, the community depended almost entirely on doubtful and diverse services for water supply before 1991/92.

Moreover, the unstable macro-economic environment during the last 25-30 years characterized by heavy currency depreciation against major foreign currencies and aggravated by high inflation rates also contributed to the sharp increases in prices during the past 20 years. In compliance with this condition, SNEC implemented many tariff increases during the past years, resulting in a cumulative increase of over 300 per cent between 1985 and 2003. Nonetheless, we are able to say with some degree of certainty that the cost is more affordable to households than would have been the case if the reform had not taken place. This statement is backed by the fact that both systems were undergoing serious financial problems which necessitated drastic measures if the community was to be supplied with safe drinking water.

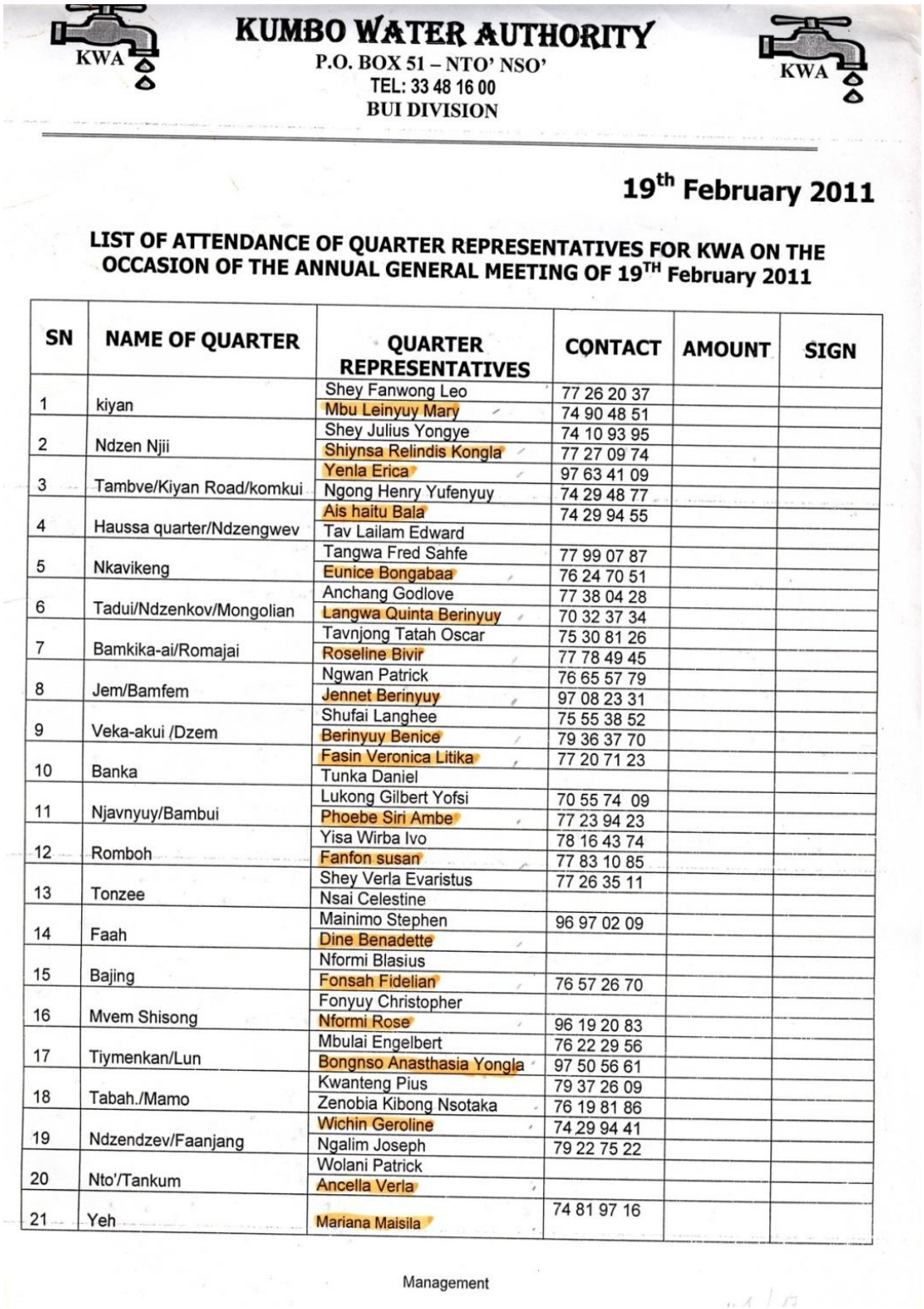
Table 15: Different water rates applied since the project creation

Type of Client Kumbo	**SNEC 1974-1991**	**The Community (NSODA) 1991-2009**	**The Council 2009-2013**
Public Users	125FCFA/m^3	125FCFA/m^3	100FCFA/m^3
Private Users	1-10m^3= 293FCFA	200FCFA/m^3	250FCFA/m^3
Meter Rents	=800FCFA	250FCFA/m^3	570FCFA
Late payment penalty	4500FCFA	1000	1000
Bali BANDECA	271FCFA	350FCFA	250FCFA

Source: Njoh, 2009

In a household survey carried out for the purpose of this study from July to October 2011, 49.8 per cent of households reported access to safe water, 57.8 percent considered the prevailing price as expensive though in Bali about 40.3 per cent considered the cost as reasonable and affordable, whilst 1.9 per cent felt it was cheap. Meanwhile, both projects have had tremendous impacts on their respective communities. The Kumbo project for example has facilitated a process where both men and women recognize the strengths of each other to address a felt need. All committees and meetings were gender sensitive, creating a new culture where men and women work together as equals. The process itself was a very empowering one for women especially, who, after realizing that their voices sometimes made a bigger impact on the attitude of political authorities, became more willing to take additional responsibilities in the community. The phenomenon was particularly striking in Kumbo where all leaders of tap stand committees were women. In addition, of the list of quarter representatives, every quarter presents a male and female (Figure 35). We observed that of the 19th February annual general meeting of the total of 41 representatives 17 (41.4%) were women. We can also see an example of a programme of a meeting in figure 36 below.

Figure 34: This document showing the representatives of the different quarters who partake in the General Assembly. The highlighted names are females.



KUMBO WATER AUTHORITY
P.O. BOX 51 – NTO' NSO'
TEL: 33 48 16 00
BUI DIVISION

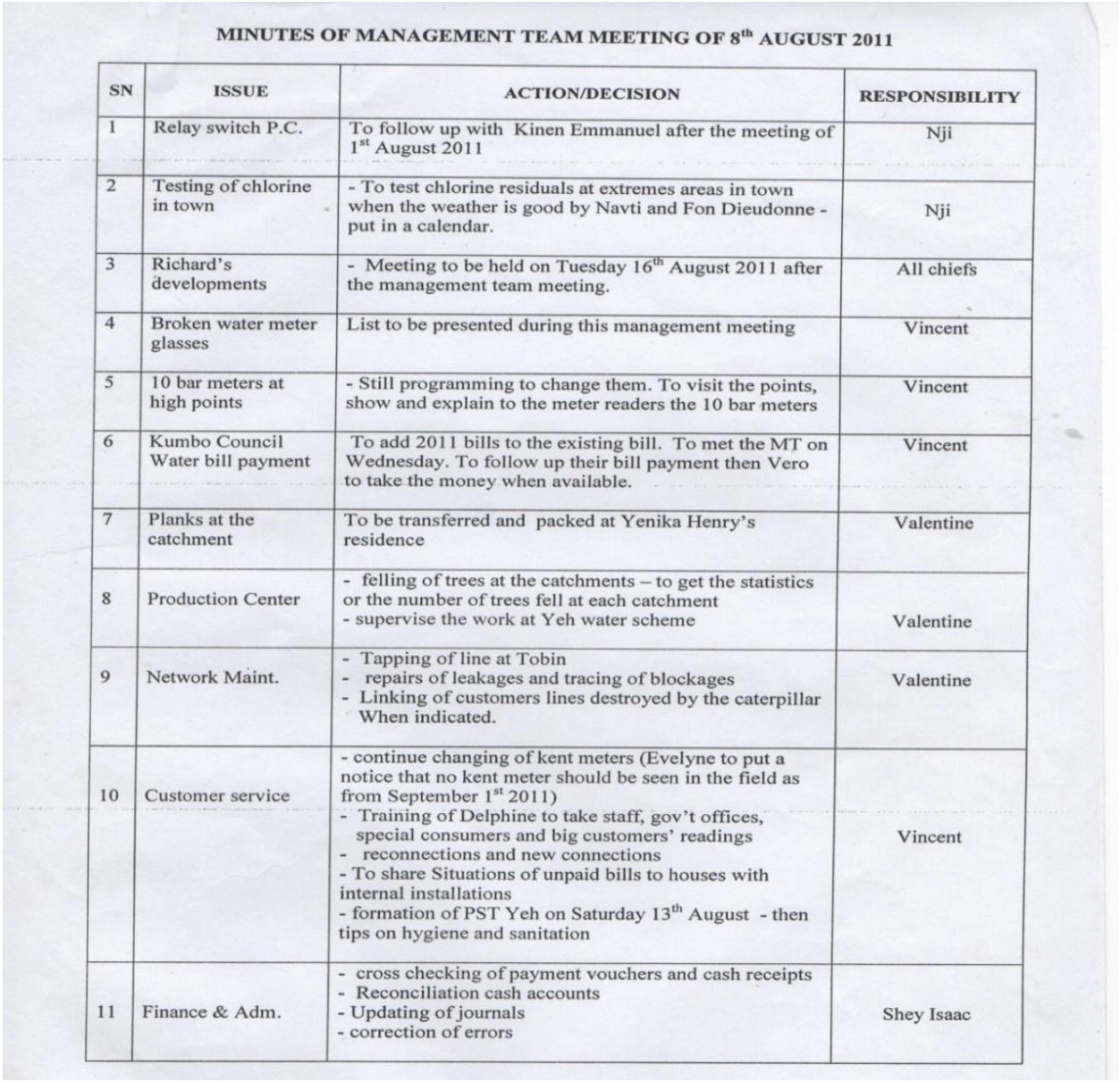
19th February 2011

LIST OF ATTENDANCE OF QUARTER REPRESENTATIVES FOR KWA ON THE OCCASION OF THE ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING OF 19TH February 2011

SN	NAME OF QUARTER	QUARTER REPRESENTATIVES	CONTACT	AMOUNT	SIGN
1	kiyan	Shey Fanwong Leo	77 26 20 37		
		Mbu Leinyuy Mary	74 90 48 51		
2	Ndzen Njii	Shey Julius Yongye	74 10 93 95		
		Shiynsa Relindis Kongla	77 27 09 74		
3	Tambve/Kiyan Road/komkui	Yenla Erica	97 63 41 09		
		Ngong Henry Yufenyuy	74 29 48 77		
4	Haussa quarter/Ndzengwev	Ais haitu Bala	74 29 94 55		
		Tav Lailam Edward			
5	Nkavikeng	Tangwa Fred Sahfe	77 99 07 87		
		Eunice Bongabaa	76 24 70 51		
6	Tadui/Ndzenkov/Mongolian	Anchang Godlove	77 38 04 28		
		Langwa Quinta Berinyuy	70 32 37 34		
7	Bamkika-ai/Romajai	Tavnjong Tatah Oscar	75 30 81 26		
		Roseline Bivir	77 78 49 45		
8	Jem/Bamfem	Ngwan Patrick	76 65 57 79		
		Jennet Berinyuy	97 08 23 31		
9	Veka-akui /Dzem	Shufai Langhee	75 55 38 52		
		Berinyuy Benice	79 36 37 70		
10	Banka	Fasin Veronica Litika	77 20 71 23		
		Tunka Daniel			
11	Njavnyuy/Bambui	Lukong Gilbert Yofsi	70 55 74 09		
		Phoebe Siri Ambe	77 23 94 23		
12	Romboh	Yisa Wirba Ivo	78 16 43 74		
		Fanfon susan	77 83 10 85		
13	Tonzee	Shey Verla Evaristus	77 26 35 11		
		Nsai Celestine			
14	Faah	Mainimo Stephen	96 97 02 09		
		Dine Benadette			
15	Bajing	Nformi Blasius			
		Fonsah Fidelian	76 57 26 70		
16	Mvem Shisong	Fonyuy Christopher			
		Nformi Rose	96 19 20 83		
17	Tiymenkan/Lun	Mbulai Engelbert	76 22 29 56		
		Bongnso Anasthasia Yongla	97 50 56 61		
18	Tabah./Mamo	Kwanteng Pius	79 37 26 09		
		Zenobia Kibong Nsotaka	76 19 81 86		
19	Ndzendzev/Faanjang	Wichin Geroline	74 29 94 41		
		Ngalim Joseph	79 22 75 22		
20	Nto'/Tankum	Wolani Patrick			
		Ancella Verla			
21	Yeh	Mariana Maisila	74 81 97 16		

Management

Figure 35: An example of a meeting programme



MINUTES OF MANAGEMENT TEAM MEETING OF 8th AUGUST 2011

SN	ISSUE	ACTION/DECISION	RESPONSIBILITY
1	Relay switch P.C.	To follow up with Kinen Emmanuel after the meeting of 1st August 2011	Nji
2	Testing of chlorine in town	- To test chlorine residuals at extremes areas in town when the weather is good by Navti and Fon Dieudonne - put in a calendar.	Nji
3	Richard's developments	- Meeting to be held on Tuesday 16th August 2011 after the management team meeting.	All chiefs
4	Broken water meter glasses	List to be presented during this management meeting	Vincent
5	10 bar meters at high points	- Still programming to change them. To visit the points, show and explain to the meter readers the 10 bar meters	Vincent
6	Kumbo Council Water bill payment	To add 2011 bills to the existing bill. To met the MT on Wednesday. To follow up their bill payment then Vero to take the money when available.	Vincent
7	Planks at the catchment	To be transferred and packed at Yenika Henry's residence	Valentine
8	Production Center	- felling of trees at the catchments – to get the statistics or the number of trees fell at each catchment - supervise the work at Yeh water scheme	Valentine
9	Network Maint.	- Tapping of line at Tobin - repairs of leakages and tracing of blockages - Linking of customers lines destroyed by the caterpillar When indicated.	Valentine
10	Customer service	- continue changing of kent meters (Evelyne to put a notice that no kent meter should be seen in the field as from September 1st 2011) - Training of Delphine to take staff, gov't offices, special consumers and big customers' readings - reconnections and new connections - To share Situations of unpaid bills to houses with internal installations - formation of PST Yeh on Saturday 13th August - then tips on hygiene and sanitation	Vincent
11	Finance & Adm.	- cross checking of payment vouchers and cash receipts - Reconciliation cash accounts - Updating of journals - correction of errors	Shey Isaac

No doubt the community-council partnership has brought much progress, both communities still have much to do to ensure real self reliant water supply systems. The challenges faced by the management can be broadly grouped to inadequacy of supply, difficulties in reaching a one hundred percent cost recovery, delays in the settlement of water bills, training of personnel and funding.

According to the General Assembly (GA) and the water management board, the biggest constraint is the inadequacy of the quantity of water that they supply. This was a fear that the community had expressed during the feasibility study about the option that will make their

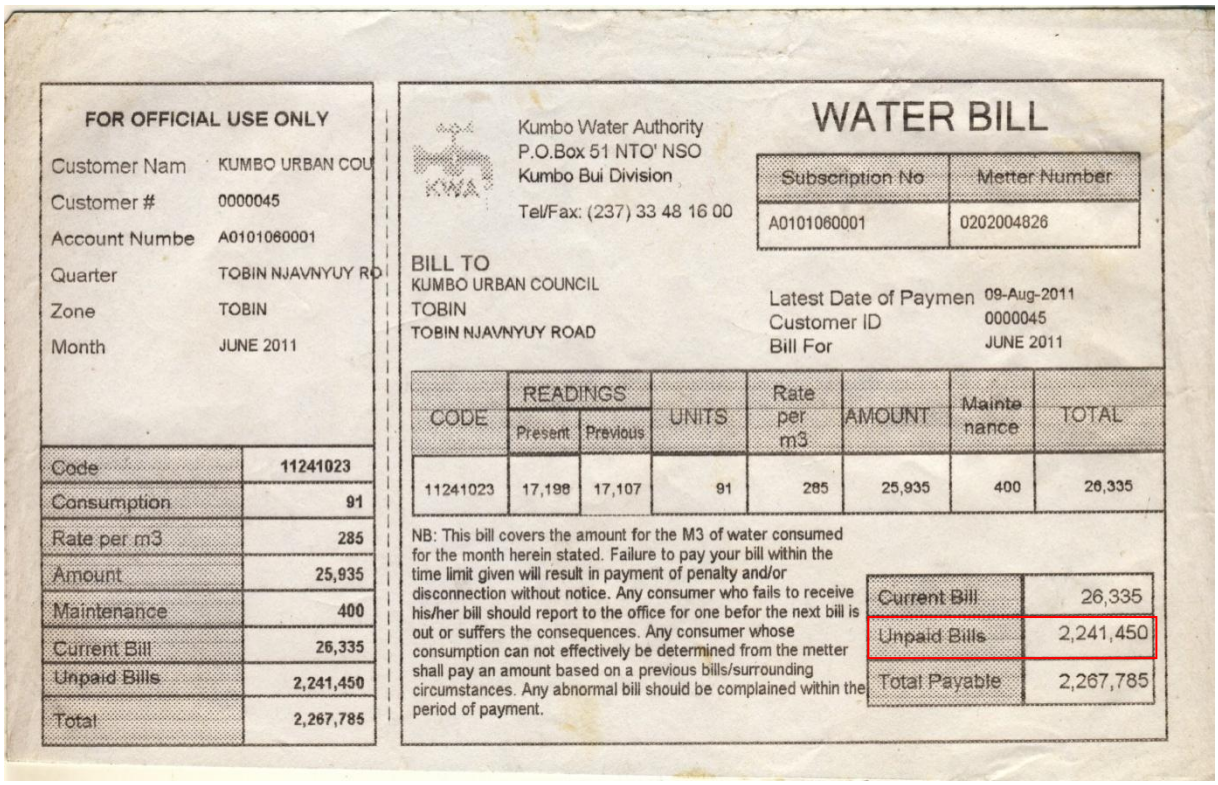
water supply dependent on the different municipalities since the daily consumption alone far exceeds what was supplied until the rehabilitation of the systems. The community hardly understands this constraint and it is of the view that the term of the contract be respected as much as possible. This problem is particularly acute in Bali. The Bali water uses a transformer in its water purification station in Koplap (See plate 4). Bali has two purification stations (Gola and Koplap, see appendix 3), the Gola station uses a slow sand filter while the latter operates with electric current and pumps chemicals at the juncture between the two stations before distribution to the town. This entails the use of much electricity, a situation that increases the expenses of the water association. Following the account of the president of the association this amount can be as high as 2 000 000Fcfa per month.

As the question of full cost recovery even though a delicate question to suggest within the two communities (Bali and Kumbo) remains the best option underlying any successful water scheme. Being one of the hypotheses we put forward in this thesis, we need to analyze with concrete field figures and observations. In the Bali and Kumbo cases and even Bafou where the mini collective water schemes were identified, they all suffer from the problem of renovations and extensions. In Bafou, for example, the population was unable to raise the necessary income needed to ensure the continuity of the SCANWATER projects that were put in place in the 1980s. Meanwhile, the Bali and Kumbo communities took up the challenge and ensured the continuity but it was not without serious socio-economic and political obstacles. Nevertheless, all three communities have always sought support from external sources in order to stay up till date. The question that arises is for how long will this sources exist and secondly are they actually free. These questions and others have been better developed in other sections of this study and takes us back to the concept of reciprocity we examined earlier in part 2.

The problem of full cost recovery is not only seen in the light of determining water prices but also in the uncertainties in collecting. The management boards face the problems of delays in the settlement of bills. This problem, they say, is quite difficult to handle due to many reasons. Community water supplies are firstly considered as the community's property and should not be "sold". The management ought to convince the population they are paying for water service delivery and not water. Normally, delays in the payment of bills could be sanctioned through disruptions in supply to the defaulters, but in our Cameroonian societies they strongly consider water as a purely social good. Interruptions can easily lead to

widespread manifestations and sabotage as was the case of Kumbo and Bali in 1990-1991. To these examples others can be added such as Tombel in the South West region where they all fought and reclaimed their water supplies that was managed then by SNEC. Thirdly interrupting water supply to households in the rainy season will not solve the problem as they will use rain water for their domestic needs. Unfortunately the management declared they were reluctant to cut supplies for this can only send the population to their former doubtful water supplies. The problems of water bill payment are acute as even the council is not exempted **(see figure below showing council water bill in June 2011)**, it also accumulates bills as can be seen on figure 36 below.

Figure 36: Council unpaid bills amounting to 2.267.785 million FCFA (3,463€)



FOR OFFICIAL USE ONLY

Customer Nam	KUMBO URBAN COU
Customer #	0000045
Account Numbe	A0101060001
Quarter	TOBIN NJAVNYUY RO
Zone	TOBIN
Month	JUNE 2011

Code	11241023
Consumption	91
Rate per m3	285
Amount	25,935
Maintenance	400
Current Bill	26,335
Unpaid Bills	2,241,450
Total	2,267,785

Kumbo Water Authority
P.O.Box 51 NTO' NSO
Kumbo Bui Division
Tel/Fax: (237) 33 48 16 00

WATER BILL

Subscription No	Metter Number
A0101060001	0202004826

BILL TO
KUMBO URBAN COUNCIL
TOBIN
TOBIN NJAVNYUY ROAD

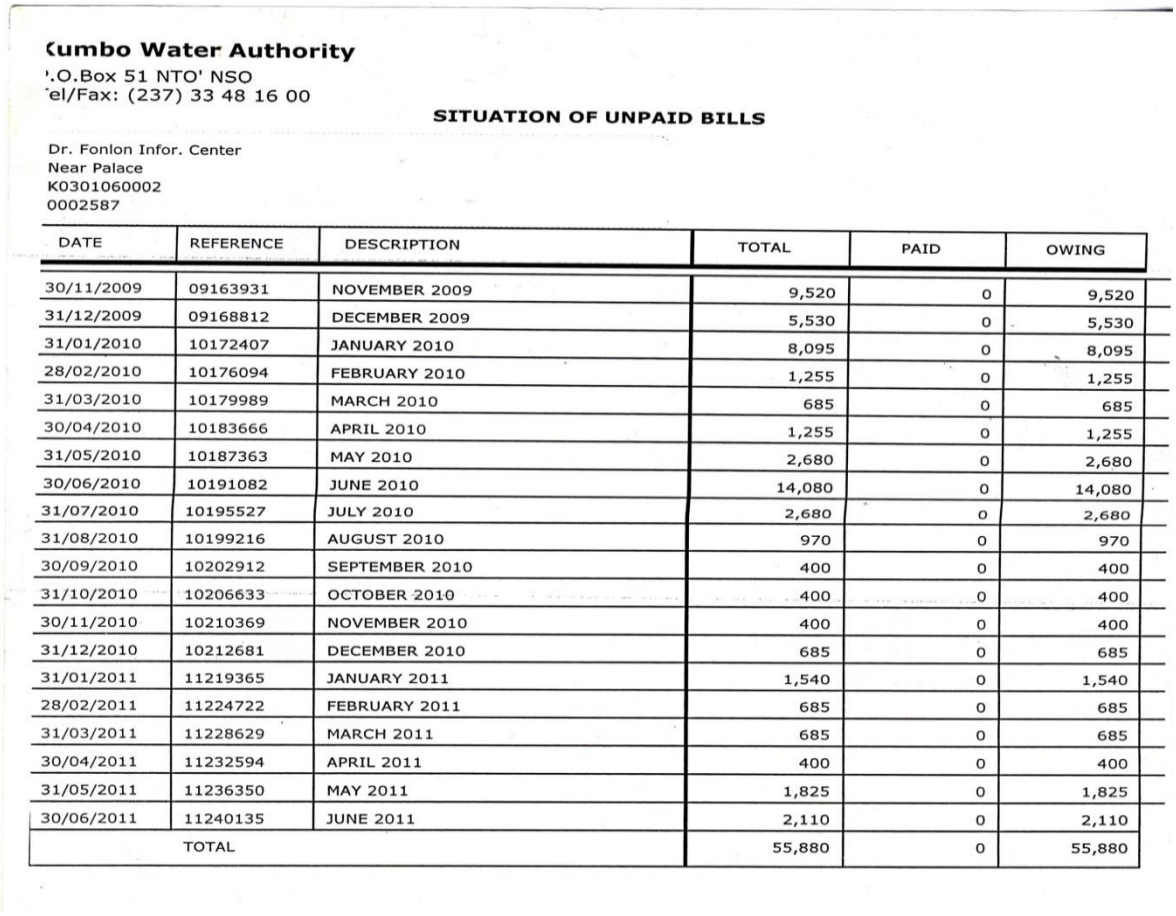
Latest Date of Paymen 09-Aug-2011
Customer ID 0000045
Bill For JUNE 2011

CODE	READINGS Present	READINGS Previous	UNITS	Rate per m3	AMOUNT	Mainte nance	TOTAL
11241023	17,198	17,107	91	285	25,935	400	26,335

NB: This bill covers the amount for the M3 of water consumed for the month herein stated. Failure to pay your bill within the time limit given will result in payment of penalty and/or disconnection without notice. Any consumer who fails to receive his/her bill should report to the office for one befor the next bill is out or suffers the consequences. Any consumer whose consumption can not effectively be determined from the metter shall pay an amount based on a previous bills/surrounding circumstances. Any abnormal bill should be complained within the period of payment.

Current Bill	26,335
Unpaid Bills	2,241,450
Total Payable	2,267,785

Figure 37: Situation of some unpaid bills in 2009 to 2012



Kumbo Water Authority
'.O.Box 51 NTO' NSO
'el/Fax: (237) 33 48 16 00

SITUATION OF UNPAID BILLS

Dr. Fonlon Infor. Center
Near Palace
K0301060002
0002587

DATE	REFERENCE	DESCRIPTION	TOTAL	PAID	OWING
30/11/2009	09163931	NOVEMBER 2009	9,520	0	9,520
31/12/2009	09168812	DECEMBER 2009	5,530	0	5,530
31/01/2010	10172407	JANUARY 2010	8,095	0	8,095
28/02/2010	10176094	FEBRUARY 2010	1,255	0	1,255
31/03/2010	10179989	MARCH 2010	685	0	685
30/04/2010	10183666	APRIL 2010	1,255	0	1,255
31/05/2010	10187363	MAY 2010	2,680	0	2,680
30/06/2010	10191082	JUNE 2010	14,080	0	14,080
31/07/2010	10195527	JULY 2010	2,680	0	2,680
31/08/2010	10199216	AUGUST 2010	970	0	970
30/09/2010	10202912	SEPTEMBER 2010	400	0	400
31/10/2010	10206633	OCTOBER 2010	400	0	400
30/11/2010	10210369	NOVEMBER 2010	400	0	400
31/12/2010	10212681	DECEMBER 2010	685	0	685
31/01/2011	11219365	JANUARY 2011	1,540	0	1,540
28/02/2011	11224722	FEBRUARY 2011	685	0	685
31/03/2011	11228629	MARCH 2011	685	0	685
30/04/2011	11232594	APRIL 2011	400	0	400
31/05/2011	11236350	MAY 2011	1,825	0	1,825
30/06/2011	11240135	JUNE 2011	2,110	0	2,110
TOTAL			55,880	0	55,880

To clarify our understanding on the challenges faced by the Kumbo and Bali communities, we preferred transcribing parts of our interviews with the chief of the customers' service in Kumbo and the president of BANDECA(The Bali Nyonga Development and Cultural association) respectively. Faced with afore mentioned challenges what we noticed is that even though a lesser part of the population in Kumbo and Bali was aware of the gravity of the problems, the management authorities were very conscious. While conversing with the head of the customers' department we registered this.

Box 10 : Challenges put forward by the Kumbo water scheme management

"We are facing many challenges, but I think the most difficult moment is over. When we took over from NSODA (Nso Cultural and Development Association) there was almost nothing left in the community water account. The former president of NSODA had squandered all the money. Normally when he took over the project from NSODA from our estimates he met about 90 million FCFA but we met 37million with no major maintenance work to account for the rest..."

When we inquired on what had been done by the community to track the embezzler, we got the following response:

"The guy is under custody and has been charged to pay the money he embezzled... but I know he cannot raise such an account. If I were to intervene I will ask they maybe sell his house for example to pay at least part of the money, but even at that I don't think it will even make up half of the amount...it's a real problem, but the guy is in prison and the fon was the one who ordered for his arrest..."
What is the community doing about it?

"What can they do?, the main thing now is to have charismatic people, I think that it can't reproduce itself because we are now working closely with the council...mayor, and I think since people are recruited and paid they can be held accountable and such a situation will be tracked early enough. Presently in the Kumbo Water Authority account as of now, we have 90 million FCFA and since I am of the customers' service department my objective is 120 million in 2012.
Do you think you can actually meet that goal?

"oh yes although with much difficulties, as I told you the main problem I face in my department are delays in the payment of bills and as I said earlier, although I threaten to cut supplies I really can't...I am still looking for strategies to let the people pay their bills in time...it's a serious problem, you know even the council is owing... but my objective still stands my objective is to make Kumbo Water Authority a reference project in Africa where we can be called to teach other areas how to manage their projects...

On asking the same questions to the president of BANDECA, we obtained the following response

Box 11 : Discussion with the president of BANDECA

What do you really want to know... you know the Bali water supply has a very difficult evolution, you know its history. This scheme has been existing for more than 50 years. At one time, it was managed by SNEC. You know what happened, the population at one time reclaimed the scheme from SNEC in the early nineties and BANDECA has been managing since then. Actually, the former management could not meet the challenges... I am a retired engineer, I worked with the UN as a water engineer, I was then solicited to help rescue the scheme...I have been trying to come on with projects…

The Bali scheme is quite complicated, with the former management at one time the population had to pay up to 350FCFA per cubic metre, far more than the national SNEC price per unit (the SNEC price per m³ is 271FCAF). The management was facing problems then because the population refused to pay such high prices which from every indication could continue increasing. They were and are not aware of the fact that the treatment plant (See plates 4) uses much electricity. SNEC and SONEL (Société Nationale de l'Electricité) had an accord. Since the project was reclaimed that accord does not exist with BANDECA and so we have to pay the electricity we use...it's quite long that the transformer was repaired and during that period (the transformer got burned) the water was not treated chemically.

Based on the community's view about formal institutions in the management of their water supplies, their opinions were that of mistrust. In an effort to assess the operation of formal institutions in water management in Kumbo and Bali area, the respondents were asked about their knowledge of the newly introduced reform based on the council/community partnership methods of water management. They were asked whether they had heard of KWA or met someone from there, whether they had heard of the new institutions of water resources management. The majority was informed but rather they revealed that they were not fully aware of its responsibilities as an authority through which the government manages water except that the officers occasionally came round to collect information on rates of water. However, with the introduction of the new partnership, it is still not clear how these traditional leaders and administrative organs interact with the newly. The process of the water reform was supposed to be participatory, involving the lowest possible level. However, the findings expose that this is still to be proven as regards the case of urban water supply based on the cases we are studying.

Findings revealed that water governance across the three towns is still altered by customary practices, under the leadership of traditional leaders. The traditional water management in these areas spanned the entire spectrum of issues: simultaneous use of customary and statutory laws on water use and access; conflict management and handling of offenders; handling of water development issues, and issues pertaining to water resources conservation. Such practices, namely; chieftaincy, jurisdiction over the catchment, customary rules governing the distribution of water; and the procedures for initiating development programmes, are "traditional" with "customary" institutions of governance, and are common practices which have been revealed all over the country. This is because aid agencies or state institutions are sometimes bypassed or consulted like secondary rather than primary partners.
A council official interviewed about the function of the municipality in insuring water service provision for communities revealed that the functions of councils seem to witness some sort of "decentralization" having to work with numerous organs (chiefs, the General Assembly, various Village Development Associations and autonomous water boards etc), the professional service providers are left to decide how far they can go in terms of their activities. When asked about its role in the management of funds for instance the official expressed ignorance. He stressed the fact that water development aid usually pass through this office mostly to seek the final go ahead to go on with whatever project they would be interested in.

There are several levels and forms of partnerships. First, is the public-private community partnership with the first represented by SNEC (the concessionaire) the latter by the Canadian government and the community. Partnerships with the communities can range from the formal partnership to less formal which mainly involved the community at the beginning of the project implementation. Second, is the community partnership with the community represented by community associations and leaders? Another partnership is that of communities and local government partnership where local government is represented by the municipality. Yet another level is that of non-government organizations, the municipality and community partnership as it operates now in Kumbo. The Global Water Partnership Cameroon was instrumental in facilitating communication and cooperation between the municipality and the community. Using only the case of Kumbo, we can identify four periods with different partners.

Overall, the form, level, and degree of partnerships formed differ from area to area depending on the local conditions. Participation of parties can be small, informal, and immediate as in the contribution of labor and construction materials, or mobilization of the community, or capability building and empowering of the community, or can be more substantial, formal, and continuing such as management of the system or a billing and collection contract.

This phenomenon is not only peculiar to the Western Highland region under study but to the entire nation. As a result of the aforementioned organization, there are a number of authorities, agencies and setups to ensure and manage water supply in urban communities. From our survey, it became evident that water governance is very fragmented at the local level. As for achieving a more horizontal coordination in urban water governance, we think it's still to come. As a result the question remains: Can partnership approach be used for purposes of achieving national coverage (governance) which after all is the aim of the national water policy. It is possible to apply the principle of community/municipality partnerships with communities and NGOs to achieve long term commitment, trust and dialogue, shared decision-making on the national scale?

Conclusion

The current chapter has shown that water institutions, formal and informal, need to be in the right perspective to attain sustainable schemes. It has also presented various institutional scenarios that the different societies have relied on for water governance. Complexity in institutional structures can be observed at many scales and levels. A multiplicity of agencies, institutions and social arrangements exist in water governance in Cameroon in general, with responsibilities covering the whole range of resource management tasks. Bureaucratic agencies comprise of sectoral ministries and local institutions, with most responsibilities extending from the national level to the lowest levels. Institutions comprise a complex array of actors operating at the local level and focusing on large range of different activities and responsibilities.

Having the municipality and the community work together to develop the solution is positive but insufficient since water supply and sanitation services need to be modernized in order to deliver quality sustainable services. In addition to the municipality and the community, the third pillar to support service sustainability is the specialized operator (which in the cases of Kumbo and Bali are the Canadian and Cameroonian governments respectively), which provides technical support to the municipality to expand the systems and delivers drinking water to the community in the quantity needed as well as sanitation services to protect the environment, thereby contributing to public health. This alliance between the communities, the municipality and aid agencies could form the backbone of the Kumbo/Bali approach to providing sustainable water and sanitation services in their towns if it works. Nevertheless it is still to be reinforced by raising the awareness of the population regarding the critical water and sanitation situation in their localities. It is also necessary to adjust institutional arrangements of the new model, evaluate the performance of local actors and train new ones.

Project strategies focus on ensuring the economic, social and political sustainability of the new management model. Economic sustainability must be ensured to permit improved service quality; once quality is improved, user satisfaction and thus social sustainability are guaranteed. With economic and social stability, political considerations are less likely to have an impact on service delivery. Experience has demonstrated that the community should be actively involved in change processes to ensure the implementation of appropriate, sustainable models. Community participation in selecting a service management model encourages the local population to appropriate and commit to the new model, thereby creating

an environment conducive to the systems economic stability, user satisfaction and the de-politicization of water service management. On the other hand, while the community enjoys the proprietorship of their projects they should acknowledge and face the challenges that come with it. Meanwhile the question remains who is actually the cause of the difficulty to cohabit; it is the state (a formal institution; through parastatal or the municipality), the community or both? We will attempt answering this question in the subsequent section.

CHAP 7

FORMAL AND INFORMAL RULES ON WATER: ARE POSSIBILITIES OF COHABITING?

Introduction

The post-colonial approach to water resource management (WRM) has been guided by global trends that include a shift from supply to demand management, decentralization of water management decisions and a more integrated and participatory approach to WRM (Higley, 2006; Cleaver , 2000). Fundamental to this new approach is the active involvement of an informed public in the management and allocation of Cameroon's water resources. To achieve an efficient framework, new water management institutions (hybrids in most cases) do appear comprising of both the formal and informal actors; such as water user associations (WUAs) and autonomous water management boards. These new institutions are required to ensure representation of all water user interest groups in their structures and the management of water resources at a more localized level. Whilst Cameroon's new approach to WRM is considered progressive in terms of international trends and practices (Hickey et al., 2004), incorporation of traditional systems of governance including the customary practices and laws relevant to water management have been largely ignored. In a critique of the evolution of water management institutions in Tanzania, Hickey et al. (2004) and Lavigne Delville (2007), highlight the problems of ignoring traditional and informal institutions- especially traditional by-laws, norms and restrictions.

This section is to back the idea that village-based "informal" institutions are often not formally involved in new water management institutions such as Water User Associations (WUAs) and we question whether these newly-created local level management institutions are meeting the expectations of the urban population. We further criticize the failure of efforts to learn from local informal institutions and report that local communities generally prefer traditional conflict resolution approaches. This view is supported by Guyer (1995) who calls for a sound mix of formal-informal institutional arrangements and recommends that the elements of existing local institutions, in particular informal traditional arrangements, should be incorporated into new management systems. Following the plural legal system as concerns water status in Cameroon (statutory laws and customary laws) we will also be questioning the coexistence of access to water through water pricing

7.1 The Need to redefine the roles of actors: disconnection with local management institutions

After analyzing the different hybrids that are being adopted in the Cameroon Western Highlands, we can say that communities are constantly in search of equilibrium or an effective management model. Presently the Bali and Kumbo communities have signed partnerships with their respective municipalities. Even though this partnership has been in existence for the past five years, it's hard to say with much conviction if the results are positive. In this section of our work, we will be analyzing the possible coexistence of the formal and informal rules in local water management in Cameroon. To guide our reflection, we deem it necessary to define the terms formal and informal as applied to this study. Institutional structures vary from country to country, but whatever the specific structure it is essential to have mechanisms for dialogue and co-ordination to ensure some measure of integration. A balance has to be met between providing a fully integrated approach with sectoral and local approaches. The roles, responsibilities and functions of water organizations vary.

The "formal" is here understood to refer to private sector corporations, institutions, firms and individuals, operating registered and/or incorporated businesses with official business licences, an organized labour force governed by labour laws, some degree of capital investment, and generally modern technology (Furedy, 1990). The term "informal" refers to unregistered, unregulated, or casual activities carried out by individuals and/ or communities that engage in activities on a small-scale with minimal capital input. Informal activities, in contrast to the formal sector in water management are often driven by poverty, and are initiated by communities and spontaneously in the struggle for survival (especially when it comes to maintaining water prices at their lowest cost). The importance of the role played by the informal sector in water management systems in general and as partners for municipalities in particular, is slowly achieving international recognition.

We should note that, from the above definitions of formal and informal, there are some actors in Cameroonian communities who figure in none. In this light we cite the case of chiefs. These actors do not appear in the official organigramme of the water sector but the Cameroonian constitution bestows them with some rights to manage natural resources such as land and water in their respective communities. From our preceding chapters, we are convinced that the powers accorded to chiefs were destined to pacify these inevitable actors

and manipulate them to get to the grassroots. This was in an era where most of the chiefs were illiterate. But today some chiefs like "Fon" Ganyonga of Bali has a PhD in education, Fon Chafar is a Magistrate of the court and, "Fon" Angwafor of Mankon is a civil engineer; just to name a few. This is to say, instead of Chiefs being manipulated, they are enjoying the double role of leaders in their communities and mediators between the state and their population. Meanwhile an effective state/community partnership might be possible if the powers of Chiefs are curtailed or monitored.

7.1.1 The Need to diminish the role of traditional leaders in Water Management

From the Cameroonian perspective, water is not only of social and economic importance, but also of cultural and spiritual significance. Since pre-colonial times indigenous communities already had organized systems to manage natural resources, which was generally handed down through oral tradition from generation to generation as presented in chapter 1. Though the colonial era greatly disrupted the physical, spiritual and social landscape of indigenous African people, there is still a strong attachment by religious functionaries and traditional leaders who still cling to these cultural and spiritual values. These individual services play a crucial role in their communities and in the management of natural resources. Even though the government acknowledges customary laws, there seems to be very little understanding of the use of water for cultural and religious activities, the values attached to these uses, and the manner in which these affect management decisions. In many rural and small town settings in Cameroon, water is considered a common pool resource whose access, use and management is usually informed by customary rules that form part of a complex system of traditional governance. These rules may be guided by cultural and religious beliefs and practices and are integral to traditional governance systems.

Historically, in Cameroon, traditional leaders had always been responsible for the management of water resources in their communities. However, during the colonial era, the roles and powers of traditional leaders were curtailed[80], while some aspects of decision making depended on the state through territorial administration (councils and divisional officers. Although the Cameroon government recognizes and integrates traditional institutions (customary laws) by including them in the legislation, this section argues that the state has

[80] This, most especially in the Francophone part of Cameroon where the direct rule was privileged meanwhile the powers were reinforced in the western Anglophone part of Cameroon with the British system of indirect rule.

not provided adequate mechanisms for the consideration of traditional governance systems in the new liberal era of water management in Cameroon. Our interest in this section is to analyze the extent to which these cultural practices and customary rules related to traditional water governance systems have been acknowledged and incorporated (or not) into new water governance institutions and approaches in Cameroon. A key focus is on the role of traditional governance systems in water management in Kumbo and Bali where new water management institutions[81] are being introduced.

These areas, although considered in this study as small towns, are in a rural setting where traditional leaders and cultural practices have played a significant role in the governance and functioning of the community - especially in natural resource allocation and use since the pre-colonial era. At the outset of the research, we discussed with members of the Water Management Boards and individuals in all three sites namely Kumbo, Bali and Bafou, in order to gain information and insights on cultural and religious practices associated with water use as well as the role of traditional governance systems in Water Resource Management (WRM) in the area. A secondary purpose was to identify and discuss issues and challenges regarding the process of establishing the water management boards as opposed to the state.

In all three study areas, transect walks (plate 6 below) were undertaken with members of the boards, in order to identify areas and sites, in or adjacent to water courses, that were considered important in terms of religious and cultural practices. Semi-structured interviews were also conducted with key stakeholders involved in water provision and management in the study area. The interviews focused largely on investigating the role played by traditional leaders and other functionaries, customary rules and cultural practices in historic and existing water management institutions in the case study areas. We also participated in meetings and were given opportunities to ask questions regarding their understanding of, and role in, new water governance arrangements in Cameroon.

[81] After the decentralisation process in Cameroon municipalities are to be the leaders in every community water supply?

Plate 6 : Bali catchment sites

Plate 7 : Bali catchment and water treatment sites

As illustrated in chapter 1, the National Water Policy provides for the reform of water law and places the government as the public trustee of Cameroon's water resources to ensure that water is protected, used, developed, conserved, managed and controlled in a sustainable and equitable manner for the benefit of all persons and in accordance with the law. Stakeholder involvement is ensured in the Act by devolving power from national to local level through the establishment of new water management institutions such as municipalities which are meant to manage water resources with local management boards. The state will devolve certain responsibilities of management of water resources at the local level to municipalities.

The purpose of reinforcing the powers of municipalities is to delegate water management to the regional or catchment level and to involve local communities within the framework of the national water resource strategy. Each municipality is responsible for the creation of a Water Resource Management Policy and Strategy (WRMP&S) for their area of jurisdiction, and, ultimately, also to carry out functions such as water resource planning in the catchment, registration, water charge collection, water use authorization, and licensing.

The municipality then devolves part of the water management activities to Water Management Boards (WMBs)[82]. The functions of the Water User Associations depend on their constitution and include the following main functions: to conserve water resources; to prevent unlawful use of water; to supervise the use of the water resources in their area of jurisdiction; to investigate water quality and water use; and to construct, operate and maintain waterworks for draining land and supplying water.

We asked to know if the legislation could not establish the norms and standards for tariffs with regards to water provision. The rationale behind setting up these institutional structures is to create a more equitable and participatory system of water use and management. As outlined in part two of this study, a wide array of institutions is involved in implementing the IWRM approach. The national water policy in its institutional framework places great emphasis on the establishment of new institutions and laws, and does not make reference to the incorporation of customary laws or existing formal and informal institutions that play a role in water management. Following what we observed on the field the failure to harmonize the customary and state laws in an atmosphere of generalized hopelessness, can lead to very

[82] Water Management Boards here denote all the different management frameworks in the different study sites, such as the Kumbo Water Authority (KWA) and the Bali Nyonga Water Association (BANDECA)

violent encounters between the state and the civil society. Communities can resort to violence to make their views heard as was the case of the three regions (Kumbo, Bali and Tombel) in Cameroon. Two of these regions were chosen within the framework of this study to evoke the extent to which the civil society can be devastating in fighting to claim water projects which they strongly believe are theirs.

Since July 2008, the state has allocated responsibility for water service provision and different findings from this research suggest that the authority of traditional leaders in terms of water management since the pre-colonial era has been reduced. Most village representatives of Kumbo, Bafou and Bali acknowledged that they were not aware of and were not informed about the current developments in water resource management in Cameroon. Water service authorities, water service providers and other state agencies such as CAMWATER (formerly SNEC) have now assumed authority in terms of water provision and management in the North West and Western regions of Cameroon. This was confirmed by interviews with representatives from government and water management agencies during the study.

The traditional leadership is implored and is used to encourage partnerships between municipalities and traditional leaders. These partnerships have mutual respect their bases rather than legally binding principles. However, there is little evidence to suggest that such partnerships exist or are being formed. Nevertheless, this partnership has proven to be important in the case of Kumbo where the *Fon* (chief) succeeded in convincing the Kumbo community to accept the influence of the council in the management of the KWA. Such partnerships are still to be realized in Bali and Bafou.

Most provincial government departments in the North West and Western regions, as well as some officials of councils, share the view that traditional leaders have little or no influential role to play in water management even though they remain important stakeholders. However, senior divisional officers[83] acknowledged that traditional institutions are inevitable, but that regional offices have not yet performing their roles due to the slow rate of decentralization and officially incorporate traditional leaders in water management institutions.

[83] We should note that these are the people who treat directly with the communities and their traditional administration and admitted that they can hardly work independently from the traditional setting

Based on work undertaken in Cameroon and South Africa, Nyamnjoh (2003) argues that the legitimacy and authority of traditional leaders dates back to the pre-colonial times while the present Cameroonian state has moulted, and has inherited imposed colonial views. *Because the state and traditional leaders derive their authority and legitimacy from different sources, their sovereignty and legitimacy in the post-colonial state is divided* (Nyamnjoh, 2003). As a result traditional and modern governance systems, structures and values are in conflict, which makes it difficult to bring them together.

The chief of service in charge of water provision in the ministry of Mines Water and Power expressed the view that traditional leaders are ignorant of the new water management policies that are developed in the 1990s (decentralization), or the need to establish new water management institutions. It is worth noting that to date even councils are still not versed with their functions within the framework of decentralization (established in 1998). Therefore, the ignorance of most traditional leaders in Cameroon could be that the process of implementing decentralization is still in its infancy in many areas in Cameroon. It is hard then to say with much certainty where the real problem lies; is it at the level of defining and implementing laws or is there need to reorganize institutions or both?

7.1.2 Imprecision of the law on the authority of traditional rulers

Customary law is still very much alive and reflects cultural values and identity in Cameroon. Customary laws are unwritten and every new law is announced by the Chief in conjunction with traditional councils. Cameroon is one of the few countries that practice legal pluralism with the Common law, statutory and customary laws. According to section 27 of the Southern Cameroons High Court Law of 1955, there is the recognition of indigenous customary laws and norms. Information gathered from interviews indicate that traditional leaders participate to inform the community about the need to set up a water system with a management committee or board, but their roles in the establishment process thereafter are not clear. The management of the water management boards and its institutional functioning is regulated by a water management constitution and the national water policy which do not clearly recognize the role of traditional leaders. All water management boards are based on their various constitutions which distributes responsibilities between traditional leaders depending on their influence within the local community. However, for effective results there is need for the traditional leaders to fulfill this role and they should be involved early in the process, such as

the design of water management strategies and institutions so as to avoid contradictions between the structure and values of the state governance system and the traditional governance system.

An additional issue raised in this regard is the need to inform traditional leaders about the general approaches and principles underlying the new water management regime, so that their contribution can be from an informed position. Members of all three study sites unanimously share the view that traditional leaders are still very influential in mediating conflicts using customary laws. A vision that also shared by community members. In most cases the main source of conflict relates to access to land and water resources.

As was raised in Kumbo and Bali, conflicts and tension around catchments related to land ownership and access mainly occur due to lack of clarity regarding the land-tenure systems in the communal lands (the catchment). Till date, traditional institutions are still actively involved in land allocation in all three study areas alongside government agencies like Divisional Officers and local municipalities. Since land tenure in rural communities is rooted in value systems, social, religious, political and cultural backgrounds and enforced by traditional leaders, it is important to have cohesion between the government structures concerned and traditional governance structures with issues of land distribution.

A traditional leader in Bali reported that traditional leaders are convinced that their powers in terms of land distribution is eroding. They think that traditional council members represent a good percentage (over 50%) whilst other stakeholders such as municipalities hold the rest. Although most traditional leaders consider this integrated approach in resource allocation as formal enough, other traditional leaders fear that they will loose their customary practices of land tenure. With the plural legal system in Cameroon, (land tenure system is partly state driven with the common and civil laws applied in Anglophone and Francophone parts respectively) many traditional leaders as well as elderly people argued that the influence of traditional governance systems in land and water management is diminishing drastically.

The plural legal system in Cameroon portrays overlapping responsibilities between councils, divisional officers and traditional authorities. The roles and responsibilities of traditional leaders and that of newly-elected political leaders are not clearly defined, resulting in conflicts. In Kumbo specifically, the management of the catchment remains a source of real

conflict between the community and the council. There have been constant returns of the land owners around the catchment claiming back their lands that they ceded in the late 1960s and early 1970s. These owners had conflicts with SNEC (the state parastatal company) and the KWA especially when the scheme almost went inoperational in the early 1990s. We visited and took pictures with the head of the customer department (see plates 8 and 9 below) to understand the impact of the return of the landowners to their lands. We visited all three catchment sites in Kumbo (Nonga and Royeh both constructed in 1973) and the two sites in Bali (Gola and Koplab). This was to understand the dynamics of the current inhabitants.

Plate 8 : The chief of customer services and I (left) at the Kumbo water catchment

Plate 9 : The extended catchment site after an agreement between the KWA and the landowners. It was agreed that landowners be allowed to cultivate but not inhabit the area. All the houses seen in the picture have been abandoned.

Box 12: The DOs version considering water catchments as state-owned

> You know the Cameroonian legal system is a complex one. There exist at least two legal procedures to solve anyone problem on resources. From my view point, solving land or water problems between individuals is very much easy. I can understand the use of customary laws at that level in so far as there is justice.
> The question becomes complicated when the state is trapped by its own administrative organization (legal system). It is ironical that the state claims its own lands to ensure a better management of potable water for the community. That is a real problem that has to be solved if we have to be efficient.
> No matter how enthusiastic you can be to promote development there are too many obstacles…working with traditional leaders…unclear administrative functions and unclear laws…

We also considered getting the view of community members who owned lands in the catchment and registered the following response:

Box 13: community members view on catchment protection

> Those people do take us for fools; of course we gave up those lands for catchment protection and above all potable water at affordable rates. What do we get in return? After 20 years, increasing water prices and dirty water. We can't loose at both ends, already, no money, no water, no land, thus no means of survival…,no we had to reclaim those lands because they are our means of survival. We are not ready to let go any longer…

From the CAMWATER (former SNEC) office in Bameneda, the response I got from the angry vice manager was short and unclear.

Box 14: Bamenda CAMWATER assistant manager

> We are no longer concerned with that case…the Kumbo people do control their water. You can go to them for more information

Today we realize that the management (Kumbo Water Authority) has developed strategies to raise funds for the Kumbo scheme by planting trees in the catchment site. These trees can be

sold and the finances saved in the project account as seen in the plate below in the Royeh catchment site constructed in 1973.

Plate 10 : Trees have been planted on the catchment site as a strategy to raise funds for the scheme. They are sold to community members and the funds raised are used in the project development.

Plate 11 : The Royeh catchment site was constructed a month after the Nonga site to boost the water supply. The catchment sites are managed in Kumbo by the Water Production Department.

Coming back to the question of the formal and informal institutions, it was unanimously acknowledged that certain responsibilities and characteristics of traditional leaders are hardly recognized within the state system. This despite the fact that communities are more attached to their traditional leaders who are more respected than Senior divisional officers, divisional officers and mayors imposed on them. Traditional leaders are mediators, a role which cannot be assumed by the state because of the level of trust that exists between the community and traditional authorities. Moreover, the knowledge possessed by state representatives of traditional institutions is that of traditional leaders are inherently intertwined with their socio-cultural systems of their respective communities. At a water management committee (WMC) meeting in the study area, it was observed that the mayor answered most questions in relation to community development whilst the *Fon's* representatives were passive delegates. From our interview with some community members we realized they were of the opinion that mayors and divisional officers belonged to political parties thus they had more political influence than the traditional leaders. However, in Kumbo today, for example, the *Fon* and the mayor work together in resolving land and water issues even though the *Fon* is the first consulted.

7.2 Customary Laws and Statutory Laws: Are there possibilities of reaching a compromise?

When traditional leaders are more legitimate than the government, it is an illusion to think that it is possible to build functioning states without their collaboration. In this case, the integration of traditional structures in the state apparatus is not a risk, but rather a critical success factor for governance and local development. From our observations and interviews carried out specifically in Bafou there exist some norms guiding water use. Communities declared that their rivers are divided into sections which have different water uses. The upper parts of rivers were mostly used for drinking purposes, the middle section could be used for laundry and bathing, and the downstream section for cattle. Other activities are closely tied to this main organization.

The research also revealed that cultural values and norms in villages were not the same. In all three villages we realized that villages coordinated their activities with internal rules in terms of access to and use of water along a river. This of course makes state governance even more difficult as it is virtually impossible to put forward harmonized laws that suit every community. Meanwhile communities have clashes concerning polluted water from neighbouring villages located upstream. The view of local representations accorded to water

can also be seen in the case of Nkwen which I studied during my master's thesis. During a tribal war between Nkwen and a neighbouring village (Bambili) the latter threatened to poison the source of the Nkwen community water supply. As a result the catchment site was hidden and only a few nobles of the village can make out the actual water source. This is to prove that water sources can be used as targets. In order to successfully hide the water source since it was done by planting trees everywhere around the catchment, the people of Nkwen had to prolong the war period since they were victorious to give time for the plants to grow.

The discordance between communities with regard to informal rules and cultural values could impact on water quality and be a potential source of conflict. Moreover, such inconsistencies could present challenges and difficulties in integrating traditional systems with modern state governance systems (Lavigne Delville, 1998; 2007). Ostrom (2003) *argues that "common pool regimes are sustainable when rules are created by a resource management group and regulated by them"*. The three towns in the study area access their water for domestic use from taps and boreholes. In relation to taps, the villages have informal rules, which aim at reducing problems of groundwater pollution of and excessive use of water.

In Kumbo and Bali which have taps, it is forbidden to wash clothes and dishes at the public stand taps. The rule goes that, everyone should fetch water using a container, and do any washing away from the water source. In all three villages, stands are erected to avoid spillages. Containers with wide openings are also discouraged as opposed to containers with narrow openings because water could spill. Responses from the women managing tap stands in Kumbo indicate that they apply some basic rules with respect to water. For example, women acknowledge that doing laundry at the tap will leave the surrounding area soaked with water and polluted with detergents. In addition, the soapy water together with stray animals can resulting in an unhealthy environment. From focus group discussions we carried out in three different quarters in Kumbo, responses as concerns rules were diversed.

Box 15: Woman using a public tap stand in Kumbo

What is your general view about using bulk water and sharing public tap stands?
Honestly when you are poor you don't very much have a choice. You simply go where you can afford. Everyone will like to have his/her own connection at home. At such you are sure of the units you par for and you make the rules, maintenance, amount…Sharing with others you need to be very flexible…on dates scheduled for clean up and attending meetings…

In Kumbo, the KWA and municipality coordinate the tap stand committees of the different quarters to enforce some of these informal. In Cameroon, it is evident that informal or customary rules continue to play a role in management and preservation of water resources. Other cultural practices aim at maintaining water quality at drinking water tap stands. For instance, only properly cleaned vessels are to be lowered into the well in the case of Bafou. Water sources with multiple uses, such as washing and bathing should be done some meters away so that wastewater does not spill over or infiltrate into the water source. These practices around stand taps are inculcated in children early enough through social learning processes. These customary rules are thus still prevalent and contribute to promoting improved water quality and should be formally integrated into new local water management systems.

This situation confirms the need for a complementarity between traditional organizations and their "partners". Once again, the contribution of partner organizations are welcome, but they stand a much greater chance to be integrated if they can become part of a collaborative innovation process of the existing community-based organization.

This section also reveals that both traditional and state governance systems are relevant to water management in the study area, although the former is clearly the dominant system. Water management in Cameroon is basically guided by state-driven policies and strategies and statutory legal systems within the decentralization context. However, many rural areas and small towns in Cameroon plural legal systems and customary rules still apply. Water and land resources are thus regulated by different legal institutions, including customary and statutory law.

In view of the current policy frameworks and legislation governing water resource management in Cameroon, the new institutional the devolution of some aspects of water management to the local level through municipalities seeks to improve service provision and manage demand. However, the traditional governance systems have a common pool resource management approach involving decision-making based on community-established rules as well as socio- cultural practices to control access to, use and ownership of water resources.

While these new municipalities actively seek to involve local resource users and key stakeholders in water management decisions through consultation and representation on boards and associations, the overriding purpose of these institutions is to implement state

water policy and law. Although these forums do provide an opportunity for traditional leaders to participate, there is no explicit requirement that relevant indigenous local knowledge and customary practices and rules be considered in the formulation of new local level management systems. Thus the extent to which these traditional knowledge and governance systems are incorporated into new management structures and systems is largely dependent on the individuals driving the process and, their recognition of the potential value of incorporating this knowledge, customary practices and rules.

It is hard to blame community actions as they are deeply rooted in other claims which one can deem inevitable. Water is a common pool resource that requires joint management and decision making, since the state, the private sector nor the local communities, are capable to effectively manage water alone (Platteau et al, 2003, Platteau, 2004). Integrating the dominant state-driven and the community-based common pool system will definitely present challenges to policy makers as the systems could potentially clash. Traditional leaders derive their legitimacy and authority from pre-colonial roots while the contemporary Cameroonian state is a creation of, and successor to, the imposed colonial state (Nyamnjoh 2003, Nkwi, 1997). The tension is reinforced by other dualities at the local level, for example the role of the state through its governance structures such as government departments, municipalities and political structures.

Our research suggests considering the various failures of governance in societies it is clear that all state structures must take into account existing social and political structures. Communities must be integrated into the process of setting up local institutions where they live as well as higher levels of the state apparatus, so as to promote a sense of identification with the larger body and ownership of the structure. It necessary because the new state structures are often very fragile, lack of experience or resources, and are at high risk of collapse. The repercussions of this could be negative for marginalized villagers who are more acquainted with indigenous knowledge systems and customary laws found within traditional governance systems. Secondly, this is proving to be a source of constant protests as communities will not openly embrace the state laws at the detriment of their water schemes which they have worked for.

Communities often have a shared understanding of who should use resources, how and when such resources should be used, and how much of the resource can be used. These

arrangements are often lost in tenure reforms, such as privatization of water resources through licenses, because such conditionalities are seen to increase transaction costs and thus hinder the redistribution of property rights. Furthermore, since they were aware of the privatization process in Cameroon most communities (Bali, Kumbo and Tombel for example) fought to reclaim their schemes before they were privatized.

This research indicates the Cameroonian state is that of constitutional and judicial pluralism. Although having a modern constitution with elected officials, it also has traditional structures that determine and influence the daily lives of people. Although most people tend to consider the two as separate domains, we can assume that people having different authorities governing them with different structures will tend to see them as independent of each other. However, dualism is the view we have from the outside but not that of the local population. Meanwhile chiefs are used as the connecting point and they are enjoying this role,[84] but the communities are hostile because they are no longer confident that the Chiefs do defend their interests. On the contrary, Chiefs have been striving towards achieving national titles, which to the population doesn't sound well for their community. This is because they think their chiefs are manipulated against them after obtaining such posts.

In customary law and practice, water is treated as a god-given common pool resource that all are entitled to use and cannot be owned individually. However, under state governance water is treated as an economic good that individuals have to pay for. This indicates that rights to water resources under customary law are fundamentally different from the requirements of statutory law. As analysed by many authors like Bakker (2007), Baron (2005) and Hugon (2005), determining or defining the status of water is very difficult and, that remains inevitable to a better management. As evidenced in the study area, customary laws play a role in determining access to and use of natural resources and resolving management conflicts. Hence, it is possible that neglect of customary laws may cause implementation of integrated management efforts to fail, or may have a negative consequence for individuals and groups who were better served by customary-based systems.

[84] The *Fon* of Bali showed his willingness by presenting his candidature as the president in 1994 before being rejected by his community. He also lost elections in Bali as he presented his candidature for the post of mayor of the Bali Urban Council.

Institutional reform occurs only under certain conditions. One possibility is to acknowledge and incorporate customary laws into the current legal framework for Water Resource Management, and introduce new political institutions. Another important possibility is to understand and render coherent customary beliefs and laws and the state driven systems that government supports institutional reform for strategic reasons. International actors may favor a stronger recognition of traditional authorities and could therefore support relevant institutional reforms. Meanwhile the main problem lies on determining the best equilibrium that could suit the community while ensuring sustainability. The term equilibrium denotes that point where the prices set per unit[85] of water meets up the cost of supplying that quantity**.** In Bali for example we realized that there actually exist two water systems; the major water system and another destined for the poor. The latter is used by the population almost for free and is still based on the very unsustainable way of management. The population pays an annual maintenance levy and water is bulk water.

Analysts of the community water management model encourage the enforcement of rules in larger spaces. Within the North West region for example, if we take the case of the "the Ngemba" speaking region, it regroups at least 15 villages and each has a community water supply and all are facing almost the same difficulties with relative successes. It is obvious that it's easier for the council handling one major water supply project than 15 projects in a precarious state. In part II, we have tried to analyze the complexity of harmonizing communities and consequently the possibility of merging water schemes. Meanwhile a major question remains: Is it actually impossible for the government to merge some community water projects and enforce better management models? We could formulate this question otherwise; because there is proof of resistance manifested by the civil society. It seems plausible to seek the opinion of the grassroots, which leads us to the next question: why can't communities facing many difficulties cede the management of their projects to councils? Attempted answers to the questions above will be given in the next section in our analysis of the relationship of the state and the community.

[85] We insist on well determined units because we realized that the cost of supplying bulk water in some public stand taps could be one of the major costs incurred with the least benefits.

7.3 The Vicissitude of the community model

One complication of this study is the complexity presented by our study sites having various community-driven forms of water management with different hybrids as illustrated in chapter 6. While Kumbo and Bali are piped water supplies, although with different management organs, Bafou has 1200 wells, deep wells, spring sources, streams, mini piped water supplies etc. With the public hand pump technology used on deep wells in Bafou, breakdowns are to be expected, and repairs are necessary. They must be able to obtain spare parts and mobilise the technical expertise necessary to make repairs. This also holds true for the extensive water network in Bali and Kumbo. Without these, all tap stands in suburban water supply programmes (and some gravity-fed distribution systems as well) will be broken down after only a few years. This in view of the fact that the cases we are studying and many other water supplies always benefit from external support to meet up with the rehabilitation of the systems in the long term.

This takes us back to our research question which seeks to find the best partnership platform to adopt. We further question whether post-construction services (both technical and non technical) from higher level government (or foreign donors) would lead to better performance of the suburban water systems. The baseline conditions in the study sites were what if governments and/or foreign donors never support at all. Any well-designed demand-driven, community managed water supply program, at least initially, should have up to date technical expertise (although, for a variety of reasons towns might not retain or mobilize to use the training or procurement systems put in place at the time of project construction).

The complexity of support provision in the study settings posed another threat to our research. To establish the relationship between the support (external) and system performance, we tried to identify support programs that were "supply-driven," but in reality even these supply-driven support programs often do not work that way in practice (the case of SCANWATER in Cameroon). The Canadian funded Kumbo water supply turned out to be a true community supported project and managed to survive for over four decades even though along the line it was controlled by SNEC. The Bali support mainly comes from the government and trans-national associations based especially in the US and Britain. In addition, the home communities have succeeded to create an account where the diaspora can help financially in the sustainability of the scheme and help pay the water bills of their relatives back home.

Kumbo, in the light of support, received visits from environmental health assistants to monitor the technical, management, and financial status of the water supply systems. This is a common phenomenon where communities are perpetually in search of support when their water systems break down or when there is a management problem or conflict (i.e., "solicited" support). We also found that help is often proposed to communities from more than just one "official" source[86] (elites come in with their interests). If the water committee or board cannot find assistance from one source, there are often other places to turn to for help, such as NGOs, nearby municipalities, or large commercial enterprises. Some villages may have the political clout to obtain financial assistance from a Member of Parliament or a wealthy relative of a village resident living abroad. Thus, even in projects designed to be supply-driven, in practice many projects are demand-driven in the sense that many communities seek out help from wherever they can get it.

In summary, the implementation of our initial research revealed the complexity of unraveling the relationship between support (be it financial or technical) and system performance. Unfortunately, it was not possible for us to test this view as none of our research sites presented projects which had never received external support. On the contrary, we decided to bring in at this juncture the study region within our masters thesis.

Our views on the relationship between post-construction support and sustainability are more tentative and merit further investigation in other field sites. The communities in our study solicit and use a wide range of post-construction support services that are available to them. Nonetheless, we found no evidence that support, or implementing an intensive supply-driven post construction support program like in Kumbo and Bali, are positively associated with technical sustainability or increased household satisfaction. This supports the strength of the original conception of the demand-driven community management model; that communities can and should take full responsibility for their systems. The non-solicited provision of community support activities that appear most promising from this study are those that help

[86] If we take the case of Bali, we realize that the Cameroon government is the only official source of support cited by the present and the other members of the management team we interviewed. Meanwhile, we learned that the Bali Cultural and Development Association (BANDECA) has national and international branches which have gone to the extent of opening an account where funds directed for the development of Bali is sent. This money is used to supply schools and libraries with books and computers, construct the Bali community mortuary and pay the expenses of the community water supply. More concerning these transnational support can be read from Ben Page and Fokwang (2003)

communities renew and further develop their capacities–post-construction training for system operations and non-technical support visits to help Water Management Committees with administrative functions or water use disputes. Our findings also present some major puzzles for the proponents of the community management model. One overarching issue is that even the communities we studied,[87] (Nkwen), where cost recovery systems seem to be meeting program objectives (i.e. villages pay five to ten percent of capital costs and collect tariffs to cover operation, maintenance, and repairs), they are not moving towards a financially sustainable future. Sustainability here denotes the capacity to (1) replace infrastructure when it reaches the end of its life (pipes of over 40 years), or (2) expand system capacity to accommodate population and economic growth.

We gathered from our findings that the new Water Management Board (the Kumbo Water Authority which took over from the Nso Cultural and Development Association in 1994) sets yearly aims and objectives. Since the change of management, the Kumbo Water Authority boasted of a fund of 90 000 000Fcfa at the end of the 2011 year and, aimed at achieving 120 000 000Fcfa in 2012. Although facing many difficulties in collecting bills, the chief of the customer service looks forward to coming up with better strategies to encourage customers to be timelier in their payments. This also holds true for Bali, but as we earlier mentioned, the Bali system presents more difficulties.

Donor funded sub-urban water supply programs have been structured as one-time investment programs, designed to meet only the immediate needs of communities. This means that the moral obligation assumed by higher level government and donors is not over. The current financing system ensures that these communities will keep returning for capital subsidies, just as some are doing now for repairs. We can cite the example of Bali with the construction of the road estimated at 27 350 880 FCFA leading to the Koplap catchment (see appendix 3) which was entirely funded by the Cameroonian government.

Some might argue that this is not a problem, that as long as poor people need help, they should get it. But there is need to reconsider these capital financing model. In Cameroon part of the reason some households continue to rely on traditional sources appears to be that

[87] Our attention here is on the current situation in Kumbo which is seemingly satisfactory. The situation is far from being achieved in Bali.

capital subsidies were not distributed evenly, and that an insufficient number of projects were conceived and installed to serve a growing population. During our field work in Bali, we realized this community has developed a strategy to meet the needs of the poor by developing two projects, one destined for the poor and the main water scheme. Here with the interview of this hair dresser supplied by the smaller project.

Box 15: Hair dresser in Bali acknowledging the existence of a pro-poor scheme

> "...We have our own water (referring to the smaller scheme in another part of Bali). Here I come to work; here is my hair dressing saloon. I don't live here, in my quarter we have our own water. We don't use meters, we don't pay water...we just pay only the yearly maintenance levy...we could not pay the prices paid in the main water project, it is too expensive...

After my interview with this hair dresser, I was not only surprised that there existed two schemes in Bali, but was even more amazed by the fact that Bali has been carved into two water zones; those supplied by the main water project and the other for those who claim are not able to pay the prices of the main water project. This new scenery raised other questions. It is interesting and a good idea having the poor as a main objective in supplying the population with potable water, but what about the sustainability of such schemes and/or strategies? The main project alone is already facing many problems managing the main scheme because of financial difficulties. The idea of the two projects only confirms the fact that the Bali scheme does not have a well identified and structured management board. It is managed within the Bali Cultural and Development Association which also conceives and realizes other projects in the community like the construction of the Bali community mortuary and library amongst others.

The next questions are: Is the second project actually destined and serving the poor? The multiplicity of projects, is it not only a way of emphasizing the social disparities that already exist, by creating more occasions for individuals and groups to build mini empires or zones of influence? This view is backed by the fact that most of these new projects are managed by management committees who in most cases are elites. Providing water to a particular region does not mean everybody in that region is poor. Unfortunately we faced many problems in Bali. Actually we cannot make out the reason for the excessive skepticism of the management team we met. We never succeeded to lay hands on any figures which could permit us to

evaluate the sustainability and functioning of both projects. All efforts implored towards having the association's yearly budget, the budget of both projects as well as other projects managed by the association failed. We could not hide our discouragement because we are quite aware of the fact that our analyses are limited. Maybe we could recall here that of the many times we visited the project office, everyone claimed he was not authorized to talk to us, neither the cashier, the secretary, the book keeper nor the technicians; this with excuses that only the president has the records. Truly all records are kept in the president's office who knows exactly what to give to researchers, all of which have no financial figures. He also makes sure he avoids figures in his interview and has a very repulsive and closed approach in his responses. Even though we previsualised this, it was very much more than what we expected because even interviews with workers or members out of the office still gave no results, a method we successfully employed in Kumbo.

In large municipalities such as Kumbo, new water systems should be routinely designed with excess capacity in both the distribution system and the water source to provide for growing populations. But everywhere in the study sites, water sector, capital subsidies are limited, and excess[88] system capacity is one of the first casualties. Moreover, few demand-driven suburban water supply programs have incorporated a systematic approach for providing follow-up capital subsidies to communities that have outgrown their current systems or want to upgrade to a higher-level of service.

In Cameroon, small cities need to plan for piped distribution systems that can support new businesses and other enterprises, and the current model for the provision of subsidized systems will not make this transition easy. Without the option of gravity-fed distribution systems such as in Kumbo and Bali, the communities will have higher Operation and Maintenance (O&M) expenses if their model is to be maintained. They will also need to plan for expenditures for system expansion. For a town to do this on its own, it will require a cost recovery system that can generate a much higher and more regular stream of revenues. They will also need to plan for expenditures for system expansion.

That brings us to a second major puzzle for water sector professionals that is brought to light by this study: why is it that the Water Management Boards (WMBs) in a significant section of

[88] Excess in this case we imply forecasting a population increase margin as relation to the present population to easily cope with increase population without necessarily embarking on new constructions. This can limit costs.

the towns (here we refer to Bali where a section of the town has been provided with a mini water scheme and the users are exempted from water bills) is not collecting tariffs at all, or collect insufficient revenue from households to cover the financial costs of major repairs, much less the costs of system expansion or capital replacement? One possible explanation is that the initial capital contribution that villagers made was enough to evaluate their demands. Making additional cash contributions to capital costs (five to ten percent of capital cost through cash or in-kind contributions) was not enough to ensure that households in the benefitting communities would be willing to pay the full financial (and non-pecuniary) costs of operating and repairing their new systems. We cannot rule out a possible link between low capital contributions and poorly performing tariff collection systems, but neither do we have evidence that increasing the initial capital contribution would lead to better cost recovery from households. Rather, our findings suggest three principal reasons that WMCs (water management boards) are unable or unwilling to charge households more.

First, generating substantial cash creates tough problems for the WMCs. We are aware of communities' perception as concerns water pricing where they hold that water is a purely social good, imposing high levies could lead to boycott and the failure to meet the primary needs of the population by providing them with potable water. These communities do not have access to a convenient, secure banking system for the management of cash. Moreover, many households have little cash to spare, and cash flow is irregular and highly seasonal. Households are also often distrustful of the accounting and security of cash balances, and water management board members may be distrustful of each other or not want the responsibility of securing cash.

Second, when the water management boards do accumulate cash balances, communities often want to spend this money on other development projects. This could be the case of Bali where the water scheme is based within a much larger development framework and difficult to clearly demarcate the water account from other development projects. There is thus little incentive for water management boards to attempt to generate the funds necessary for major repairs to the water system if they will "lose" them anyway. In such a situation, it makes sense to just wait and try to raise the funds when the need arises. For all these reasons, life is much simpler for members of WMCs if cash is only sufficient to pay for minor Operation &Maintenance costs or is only collected at the moment funds are needed.

Third, water management boards may be right to believe that future capital and repair subsidies will be forthcoming from donors, NGOs, and higher levels of government when they are needed. Not only was the vast majority of the capital for these projects provided at no cost to the communities at the time of construction, but a significant number of Water Management Committees in our sample have successfully found ways to keep away households from the cost of repairs to the water systems. They have obtained donations, free spare parts, and free repairs from a wide variety of NGOs, private individuals and companies, and even local governments. Herein lies a third puzzle for suburban water supply policy: does the sector's current capital financing model – and the post-construction activities of these NGOs and other actors – create a moral hazard that will undermine the principle of community self-reliance in the post-construction phase?

In Kumbo and Bali the fact that they had received grants from outside sources after the construction of the project may not seem like much, but this means that almost all WMCs would know that NGOs and others are active and nearby. It may seem like a reasonable bet to wait until major repairs are needed and see if an NGO might provide the cash infusion required. Moreover, an effort by a WMC to establish some kind of sinking fund to make major repairs and replace capital at some future date may make the community "less needy" to the NGO, and actually preclude the community from receiving such support. Indeed, this situation seems to be widespread in other small towns in Cameroon with similar disincentives to financing their own capacity expansion and system rehabilitation.

From the perspective of the NGO, repairing a tap stand or fixing a broken transmission line for a piped distribution system may well seem like an ideal project. With a relatively small amount of incremental funds, the NGO can reasonably claim to its donor base that all benefits of the infrastructure are due to its involvement, because without the incremental investment the system would have remained broken (This was the case of Kumbo whose water scheme almost went inoperational in 2007 before the Canadian government came to their rescue through the council appeal. This also holds true for Bali before the timely intervention of the Cameroonian government). NGOs (and other donors) are especially attracted to such opportunities where their funds have great "leverage", but this funding strategy raises two important questions.

First, would the community have managed to raise funds locally and made the repair if the NGO or donor had not been standing by ready to step in? Second, if all the credit for the

infrastructure goes to the "donor", who is going to be willing to continue making the capital infusions (supplies) necessary to replace the ageing capital stock, i.e. to do the "challenge" that is required under this capital financing model? Will government and donors step into these communities ten to fifty years later when these systems are fully depreciated and replace the capital that NGOs have kept running?

The present situation in the communities in our sample is not being financially sustainable without new infusions of capital investments in the relatively near future both to replace existing infrastructure and to provide for economic growth. The moral hazard from the active involvement of NGOs, religious groups, and other non-state actors (transnational associations) in the suburban water sector is likely to prove to be an important factor undermining cost recovery efforts. Meanwhile this may discourage communities from making their own investments in water infrastructure to support economic growth.

Long-term financial sustainability requires a different policy model. Communities do want and need help, but this assistance should not perpetuate their dependency on NGOs or higher levels of government for limited capital subsidies that lock communities into infrastructure systems that are not suited for achieving economic development or for accommodating growing populations. Nor should it undermine local initiatives to pay for higher levels of infrastructure or infrastructure expansion. The coordination of the policies of NGOs with government and with each other seems especially important and worthy of future research. The involvement of NGOs and donors in the sector has proven important for fostering policy innovation, serving the poorest of the poor, and helping communities.

One important role for NGOs in the future could be as a catalyst for providing community support, rather than as a dispenser of capital subsidies for communities that cannot manage to repair their water projects. But as suggested by our findings, NGOs can also create moral hazard problems that may ultimately undermine small town and rural economic development.

In summary, the community management model has come a long way towards finding the key to success in small towns. The next frontier seems to be the design of a policy framework that will enable communities to handle the twin challenges of system rehabilitation and expansion. Even though we propose the putting in place of a sound framework taking into consideration the diversity and rigid communities we cannot stop asking if it is actually possible to create

this framework for the best results in such complex environments. Based on our analysis up till now we can retain that the dependency crisis or the inability to rehabilitate water supplies is not only based partly on the laxity of the state policies, but also and mostly on the difficulty in implementing these policies in the culturally complex Cameroonian societies. The Cameroonian government not only faces difficulties in harmonizing the two main factions(Anglophone/Francophone) with their different perceptions, laws and system of education, but also the much more complex cultural diversity with the 250 ethnic groups (with each one having its perception about the management of water supplies, the state and its policies).

The complexity of communities may be just one of the many problems facing community water supplies in Cameroon. An example of reaching common policies in the management of water supplies could be seen in water prices. There exist as many price disparities among projects as the number of projects. In the above section, we have cited and analysed the difficulties faced by the Cameroonian government and other aid agencies in letting communities pay for water services. To us, the difficulty not only lies on the capacity to convince community members, but most importantly on the ability of setting affordable prices. Still, talking of affordable prices means adopting rates that the population is willing and capable of paying. One question comes to mind, are the prices proposed (prices that the community is willing and capable of paying) by communities capable of meeting costs? If not who subsidizes the extra costs? We interrogated the members of our three communities and got some attempted answers to the questions as analysed in the subsequent section.

7.4 Determining Water Prices in Community Water Supplies: In between resistance and Cost Recovery

Water rates and pricing structures embody a mix of both broad and specific allocative, environmental, and administrative objectives. We will recall from our analyses from chapter 3 that economically, price is the most basic factor that consumers will use in their decisions on the quantity of water that they will consume. Nevertheless, water remains a very vital and non-substitutable good. Meanwhile Cameroonian communities still very much consider water as a purely social good and thus accepting to pay for water services is very difficult. Apart from the economic efficiency criterion, there is little theoretical and practical guidance to establish the price of water services. One of our hypotheses we formulated was that a one hundred percent cost recovery is inevitable to ensure project sustainability. In other words,

water price is especially critical to a thorough understanding of water demand, particularly because it is one of the few mechanisms that water system managers have under their control that can directly influence consumer behavior and water demand. We adopt this view in the cases of Bali and Kumbo that have adopted the metering system with which they can directly control water demand.

Although water management agencies (government, Water Management Boards, NGOs etc) routinely collect information related to water quality and the physical infrastructure of water utilities, few collect any information related to water demand, especially water rates and prices. This section seeks to provide an analysis of water rates and rate structure data collected from the sample of community water systems in Bali and Kumbo and, how water pricing is viewed by community members on the one hand and the management on the other hand. We set out to address the following research questions as a response to the above hypothesis. What are the prevailing rate structures and billing practices in Bali and Kumbo? How variable are water charges and prices? What are the average amounts of charges in terms of monthly water bills consumers pay for water? What objectives do water managers consider when formulating rate structures in actual practice? In what ways do these considerations vary from one community to another? And lastly, what are the alternatives employed by communities to cope with their operation and capital costs?

7.4.1 Recommendations of International bodies to deal with field realities

The 1992 Dublin International Conference on Water and the Environment, which preceded the Earth Summit in Rio, drew attention to the new challenges facing policy makers in managing and allocating water resources. The international meeting for the first time defined water as an economic (as well as social) good and its "commoditization" should encourage the establishment of approaches based on expressed demand by communities "consumers". How the cost level (capital and recurrent) is determined and who encures part or all of it is in the heart of debates and the focus of "new approaches" in the sector since the 1990s.

Service coverage guaranteed by the public sector gave way to an approach emphasizing government, civil society and the private sector, in which government role was to act as a facilitator in service delivery interactions between civil society and other sectors (private or public). The logic of sustainability – sustained by "demand-responsive" idea by the World Bank emphasizes on cost recovery (most if not all recurrent and some capital). Communities

should thus be considered as customers of water services and (economic) good rather than users of public (social) goods. This idea is still very timidly accepted in Cameroonian societies which still strongly consider water as a right (social good). Meanwhile the World Bank summarized the key characteristics of this demand (the shift from water as an entirely social good to paying for water services) responsive approach as: The community initiates and makes informed choices about service options and how services are delivered.

The community contributes to investment costs relative to the level of service and has significant control on how funds are managed. Thirdly the Government should regulate by setting clear national policies and strategies (including legal frameworks) and creating an enabling environment for all actors. Moreover communities (or a representative legal body) should own and are responsible for maintaining the services. Lastly, communities should be empowered, and awareness is raised to stimulate demand (World Bank, 1998b). What was not foreseen by the World Bank as concerns the realities on the field is how to determine prices that can ensure sustainability; who encures the prices and what percentage? How can the poor be integrated? What percentage can be augmented by the government, how and when?

Based on our field knowledge and the specificities of the different water schemes the difficulties were mainly in determining the water prices, who pays what (depending on the revenue differences), what pro-poor strategies could be adopted, which partnerships can achieve the best results? On the one hand, understanding water at a household level means addressing the uses of water as an asset as well as its uses as an economic and social consumption good at this level. On the other hand, institutional development should be more closely linked to developing social capital to benefit the poorest members of the communities. This shift in emphasis has various implications for poverty reduction, one of which is whether or not poor consumers can afford to pay. A major question in this shift is whether, in an environment where communities and households are expected to pay for a level they can afford, this demand will be generated on the basis of perceived health benefits, or other socio-economic benefits (including reduced time, greater income opportunities and food production).

The central issue we wish to address here is that on our study sites, goals were seemingly first directed towards the health benefits therefore, then on the impacts of improved supplies on socio-economic livelihood of households. A central strand that was of particular interest to us

was to understand the motivation of households to participate in community efforts to pay for water services.

The World Bank (1998) acknowledges resistance to the approach when implemented in centralized, supply-oriented situations[89], though approval from lower-levels could potentially overcome this resistance. We state, with reference to the Bali and Kumbo water schemes, that the initial challenge in implementing such a project is overcoming the resistance and skepticism of the community towards the government and other players in the sector. This we learned from the communities, that they never felt public subsidies and decision making was centralized during the state management era (SNEC management between 1957 in Bali and 1963 in Kumbo to 1991 when both communities reclaimed their water supplies). There was no such problem with NGOs and local communities as illustrated in the preceding sections. For the purposes of this analysis, the major issue is whether stimulating community demand around the idea of health benefits can be achieved. This is because we assume that this is the only point that can encourage their positive reaction. Given the present difficulty in establishing these links, convincing communities to adopt measures (some of which have fewer tangible economic benefits) will prove even harder.

Within a complex socio-political atmosphere, it was hard to determine how far our communities can be involved financially. To what degree are they willing to forego an additional coin for the well being of their supplies? In the two preceding chapters we have neatly summarized many of the wider social and political issues involved. In our literature, we suggested that the poor can pay for water, but to make this a policy objective risks causing political damage and generate the need for complex tariff charging and enforcement mechanisms. This we have carefully analysed with the specific examples of Kumbo, Bali and Tombel showing how they resisted water rating by the public utility due to general political unrest. We realized that at the local level determining water prices is closely related to the political and social atmosphere between the state and society. Some of which are also deeply influenced by the poor processes of decentralization and privatization that are creating general skepticism. As an institution, a community is the sum of its human and social capital to which the cultural texture ranging from political, clan or tribal affiliation, to possible regionally-specific characteristics are added. These additional facets of communities serve to underscore

[89] This has proven to be the case in Cameroon in the cases of Kumbo, Bali and Tombel as we have explained detailing in the preceding chapters

the importance of the policy and political level within the box of "state–society transactions" and the impact of these processes on water supply development. With the main problem that these two actors (the state and the society) have diverse views on water status.

Literature on water pricing distinguishes two main schools of thought, those who consider water as an economic good, and those who place water under social goods. Cameroon has the serious problem of divergent perceptions. From what we observed on our fields the justification for rationing water versus charging a higher volumetric price is threefold. First, if water is considered a basic need, then allocating it on the basis of price, especially if demand is price inelastic, may be inequitable because it can place a large cost burden on poorer and larger households. Second, if the community water supply is not metered (such as the case of the second water project in Bali destined for the poor). In this case, raising the water price in the form of a fixed charge provides no financial incentive to consumers to reduce their demand. Third, even when households are metered and are charged a price for their water, the billing period is such (usually monthly) that if an immediate and temporary reduction in demand is required, it may be more effective to implement a rationing (cuts) scheme rather than raise the price. Already, in all three sites, there exist rationing strategies applied by the management or natural. Natural is in the case of Bafou where most of the water supply points are wells with a considerable drop in the water table during the dry season which necessitates a reduction in the demand in order to have at least the minimum supplies for longer periods.

7.4.2 Unclear water rating structures

All along in thus dissertation we have been examining the best option and means of achieving sustainable models. In the preceding sections we analyzed the different partnerships that exist with their relative successes. Meanwhile the main difficulty observed is based on water rates and rates structures. In this section, we will be analyzing the current water rates and rate structures that were collected from 2 of the more than 1,000 community water systems in North West Cameroon. One survey (questionnaire, appendix 1) with 13 questions was used to collect information about the characteristics of water systems, their water rates, and ratemaking practices. The survey was carried out on two different field trips to Cameroon (December to March 2010, and a second trip in July to October 2011) making up a total of six months of field work. Nearly 60 persons responded to our questions, which requested basic information on water system service area characteristics and copies of their current and past

(since the realization of the projects) water rate schedules. The number could seem not to be representative enough but this questionnaire was accompanied by other data collection methods like Focus Group Discussions which enabled us to get in contact with a larger population. Water rates schedules for at least the current year were provided by all the respondents and this information was used for much of the analysis in this study. Where relevant, conversions were made to adjust for variations in volumetric units and billing cycles. Both primary and secondary data were collected and analyzed to meet the objectives of this research.

The contents of each survey and the characteristics of responses to each phase of the survey are described below. The survey questionnaire for both phases was designed to elicit information on the rate-setting process and the factors that drove and still affect the evolution of rates. A copy of the questionnaire is included below as an Appendix. This survey instrument contained independent sections to provide information pertaining to: characteristics of past and current water rates/rate structures as well as ratemaking objectives, their relative importance, and known or perceived trade-offs**.** In addition, the technical approach to how rates/rate structures were designed and the identification of stakeholders involved in rate setting. Thirdly, the different steps used in proposing, designing, and implementing new rates/rate structures. Lastly we also seek to understand the attitudes and perceptions regarding the adequacy and effectiveness of the current rate and rate-setting procedures.

The survey also included information on several criteria that pertain to the acceptability of water rate including (1) economic efficiency, (2) revenue sufficiency, (3) revenue stability, (4) rate stability, (5) equity, (6) fairness, (7) demand reduction and conservation, (8) managerial/administrative efficiency, and (9) political acceptability. This is as illustrated in tables 15 to 18 below.

We gathered from our respondents, both the community members and the management that water systems consider multiple objectives in establishing water rates. We identified a minimum of three objectives by decision makers in determining water rating which in each case used cubic meters as their measuring unit.

-Cost recovery objectives (including recovery of the costs associated with operations, capital,

and overhead costs) are the most prevalent rate setting considerations and are generally weighted the most essential. Other objectives are also important. Affordability for low and fixed income customers, and securing funding for future capital improvements were also objectives listed by more than half of the respondents in both communities. Other criteria, such as rate or price stability, rate simplicity, water conservation, and economic incentives are not a strong consideration in ratemaking. However, in Kumbo that stated that they do consider these objectives, they were weighted quite heavily in the ratemaking process by the new management put in place since 2007.

-Price reform in the water sector worldwide has often encountered strong social and political opposition, and Cameroon is no exception to this rule. Local governments in Cameroon and elsewhere around the world are often reluctant to raise water tariffs to a sustainable level and, as a result, water subsidy is common in various forms. This situation is even more complicated in Cameroon because municipalities act as passive partners who hardly participate in the price setting of community water schemes. Although often stemming from concern for the well-being of poorer households, low water tariffs, which result in inadequate financial performance of a water system, may have perverse income distributional consequences. Evidence from Kumbo and Bali illustrate this general issue.

Many household surveys done in Kumbo, Bali and Bafou show that residents are willing to pay for water supply to a certain extent. Their degree of willingness varies by city and by income category. Nevertheless, affordability by the poor is a concern in any effort at pricing reform. The challenge is therefore to reconcile the objective of economically efficient water use with that of ensuring that poor people obtain adequate service for their essential needs. The issue of affordability of water supply by the poor is analyzed and addressed in the studies of Kumbo and Bali. They provide a good illustration of the situation confronting municipal authorities in Cameroon.

The poor population comprised of over 50 percent of the total sample, indicating that the percentage of the poor is significant and cannot be ignored. As estimated by the survey, the willingness to pay for water by the poor was generally positive, but the maximum levels they can afford barely exceeded the existing water tariff for those supplied by stand taps in Kumbo. Meanwhile, those supplied by the pro-poor water project in Bali expressed their willingness to pay, but insisted that they do not have the money. Even then, in the case of Kumbo the

100CFAfrancs they pay as opposed to 250CFA francs paid by households already consisted about 3 percent of household incomes. This is considering the fact that most households supplied by general stand taps in Kumbo paid an average of 700CFA francs per month being the 3 percent of the profits they make from small traders or income received from relatives outside Kumbo. In such precarious conditions, it is clear that the poor would be reluctant to accept a new price increase if no financial support is provided.

The general public in all three towns (90 percent of those interviewed during the survey) agreed that it was necessary for the government to provide minimum support to compensate for further increases in water tariffs. Unfortunately government support to the Bali water supply for example is in a technical form, in the construction of the road leading to the second water catchment site in Koplab (appendix 5) and the construction of an additional water tank (see plates 13 and 14).

Plate 12: Old Water tank constructed by the Germans with the meter calculating the total water supplied out of function. It is thus impossible to know the exact water supplied in Bali

Plate 13: New tank under Construction beside old tank (painted blue)

Improving pricing policy for water resources while protecting the poor has been a preoccupation with governments worldwide and a variety of measures have been employed at times with much resistance from the society. Actually literature on efficiency of the public management model has always been criticized because it is not economically efficient. Most public monopolies are sustained by government subsidies which hinders consumers' awareness of the "user pay" principle. Even if it was possible to provide subsidies to economically inefficient water supplies, how can they be organized to reach the poor only?

OECD (Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development) report (2011) grouped subsidies into two categories: income support measures and tariff-related measures. According to this organization, Income support measures comprise those which address the individual consumer's affordability problem from the income side, such as water bill reductions, water service vouchers from the governments, discounts, and payment assistance. Whereas, tariff-related measures normally developed and implemented by governments in their financing role or by the water utility itself, include increasing block rates, capping metered tariffs, special tariffs for low income consumers, subsidized connections to the

network, and so on.

From the above types of subsidies aid could be direct to customers or indirect through reductions. In Kumbo and Bali, none of these methods is applied, instead we observed two additional strategies; the use of bulk water in both cases but still at different degrees. In Bali they adopted another approach; that of constructing a second project for a region they considered was inhabited by low income members (what I termed the "pro poor scheme"). The problem as earlier highlighted is that this water scheme serves a region which comprises both the rich and the poor.

In addition the prerequisites used to define the poor are unclear. If possible it will require much expenditure in determining poverty levels and they cannot be determined at the local level. Furthermore the Kumbo and Bali schemes are so community inclined that the afore-mentioned measures are hardly possible. The "poor" in Kumbo carry water from public stand taps with rates less than half the rate of private owners (100CFA francs while the private water owners pay 250CFAfrancs per cubic meter). While those using the pro-poor water project in Bali pay an annual levy of 1000FCFA against a monthly bill to those attached to the main scheme.

A central issue to be addressed is that raising or adjusting prices of water may have significantly regressive impacts in the two main water systems. While a uniform pricing scheme in the alternative strategies in both systems (bulk water supply with relative low water prices in Kumbo and a community water supply with annual levies in Bali) may attain efficiency conditions at the margin if at all they do, it also gives rise to affordability problems for poorer sections of the population, with potential threats to their health and general well being.

A common way and the idle strategy to address this dilemma is to change the prevailing flat rate tariff structure to one which charges more for higher rates of consumption.[90] This proposal goes for the case of Bali, but will only remain wishful thinking because this is only possible with meters which are inexistent in the pro-poor project. Meanwhile, it is obvious the community which is unable to meet its maintenance, cannot embark on a metering project taking into consideration the fact that the metering of both projects (the main projects) was done by the National Water Corporation (SNEC). Indeed, as noted earlier, concern for social

[90] We are referring to the Bali pro-poor project. This was also the case of the Nkwen water supply we studied in our Master's thesis in 2008

equity in water pricing is quite difficult to attain. On the contrary, it is widening the gap between the poor and the rich in the case of Bali for instance where a whole region is considered poor. It is obvious that the region designated as poor and provided with free water is inhabited by some rich people who not only use free water, but are the ones ensuring the management. In addition, they are also the ones with sophisticated houses with internal water systems that demand high water supplies. This only aggravates the problem of cost recovery and water access for the poor because there exist no formal cross subsidy measures between the rich and the poor. I addition using the health and pro poor objectives as main accessibility targets renders cost recovery even more difficult and consequently sustainability.

Normally, local communities, no matter how poor they are, have some capacities for self-help improvement. Therefore, communities should, in principle, get assistance only after they have exhausted their own initiatives. External assistance ought to be a form of help towards self-help, which would be intended to provide initial stimulus. However, the granting of the funds by external agents without exhausting the community's own contribution and commitment for the construction of their schemes seems to have negated local initiatives. This is in the sense that the community became more dependent on external support. External support seemed to have reduced the impetus of the residents on self-help activities. Making people aware of their own capacities and resources can help increase the options available to them. Professional advice can increase the choices further, but successful professional intervention requires that the value of such intervention is recognized and accepted by the low-income households.

Still in the issue of acceptability and affordability of water rates, it has been noted that the creation of a new institutional plateforms, (the different community hybrids) met with different experiences. That changing rates with different reactions from the population. Till date although the communities collaborate with the municipality to ensure water was available to the residents, it is however, taking long to adapt to different institutional changes especially in providing water at a charge. When the Bali and Kumbo schemes were managed by the National Water Corporation, the inability to afford water rates let the population to either use doubtful water sources or complement their supplies with streams. In Bali for example we realized people still do their laundry in streams to reduce their consumption, consequently their bills. (See plate 14).

Plate 14: Children washing dresses in streams to reduce home consumption of potable water (Ngefor, G.S., 2011)

Although there is improvement in the water supply (quantity and quality) in both settlements due to the competition that exist between communities, there is a glaring need for future control of the water resources in the areas. It is indisputable that the systems in place in all three sites need to be more coordinated and more importantly reviewed to ensure sustainability in the water provision process. Without cost recovery, a project collapses. The pre-condition for a service to be sustainable and efficient is that there must be an effective cost recovery mechanism. In the present case, it has been clearly observed that even with financial assistance to build the infrastructure, the project will collapse if there is no mechanism for recovering costs for operation and maintenance.

It has also been learned from the case of Nkwen (the case we studied in our masters) that costs can be kept down by organizing and managing the construction, operation and maintenance by the people themselves. This can be done at household level or by having elected or appointed members of the community to take on tasks for which they are not paid. There is however recognition of the limitations of the elected or appointed representatives

from the poor households, since they have inadequate incomes and limited time to devote to organisation and management. The costs were kept down by having free or informal technical support (through negotiating special deals) from formal institutions like municipality and NGOs like Helvetas when they existed. These formed the main institutions required to support local initiatives.

It is noted that in order to adopt higher technology, household saving is not enough and thus it must be supplemented with external resources support, e.g. from friends, NGOs, the government or international organisations. The vertical and horizontal links created were inevitable to facilitate local and external inputs into the provision and improvement of water supply in the settlements. The collaborations ensured that the community could use locally available resources to supply safe water. However, the donations of capital funds from external sources to sustain the systems seemed to be a one-time input that did not involve a continuous follow-up from the collaborators to evaluate progress or constraints in order to change rules and procedures in the water provision so as to ensure sustainability. It might be that they (donors) did not like to be involved in the politics of the water provision that involved free water service to the people. It was believed that the residents were poor and thus were not able to pay for the water; this is a misleading policy which donors did not like to be involved in. In fact, the consequence is that without such pro poor "solutions", the people resort to streams and/or traditional wells. This no doubt leads to increase in diseases because of using contaminated water from shallow wells and streams.

External and internal collaboration is necessary to have improved water supply in the settlements. However, it was noted that vertical and horizontal links evolve through various interests, some are hidden some are open. Linkages solicited and used are not one-time help, but a long-term assistance to ensure that the systems that have taken off do not collapse. Allowing competition in infrastructure provision ought to assure high quality service while the cost recovery embedded in the provision allows a step-by-step improvement of the system according to demand. Often without self-help or voluntary leadership various functions may not be performed.

7.4.3 Varied water rates which donot meet up with costs

Water as a commodity is a source of revenue for operation and maintenance; as technical infrastructure, it generates employment and income. Thus, water is both a social service and an asset that could be transacted to reap household income and revenue not only for operation and maintenance of provided basic infrastructure, but also for facilitating a step-by-step improvement. SNEC had strong formal links with public institutions such as the National Electricity Corporation (SONEL, Société Nationale de l'Electricité). The latter provided services (current) which was used to sustain the purification plants in Bali. This in turn enabled the Bali community to pay the national prices (271CFA franc), a situation that drastically changed when the community reclaimed management. On the other hand, SNEC abode to the principle of cost recovery for operation and maintenance. Since the recovery of the system by the Bali community, water prices have skyrocketed (350CFA francs, more than the national price of 271CFA franc/m^3) because the breakage of this contract and BANDECA had to pay electricity consumed. It had a monthly bill of up to 3 million francs which only comes to increase the financial burden of the management. Unfortunately, this sum was to be retrieved by the management from the community which strongly resisted. The Bali population paid water prices far higher than the national average; 350CFAF against 271CFAF per cubic metre; a 22.57 percent increase.

The analysis of water rates of community water systems in Bali, Bafou and Kumbo show a great variety of rate designs and a wide distribution of charges for water services and volumetric consumption units. This variability (metered and non-metered options) seems to go beyond the differences in cost structure among individual systems, thus indicating the presence of some subjectively derived rate design elements to satisfy the various pricing objectives. Considering the fact that water rating or pricing is quite problematic in the study region we adopted a more precise approach by asking respondents to rank their opinions.

The results of the survey of ratemaking practices provide important insights into the current practice of developing and implementing water rates by community water systems in Cameroon. They indicate that water supply systems consider multiple objectives in establishing water rates; chief among them is the recovery of costs associated with operations, capital, and overhead costs of water supply (See table 16). Other important objectives are securing funding for future capital improvements, and affordability of water service for low

and fixed income customers.

Table 16 : Ranking of water rate objectives according to economic efficiency and affordability

Ratemaking criterion	N° of affirmative answers	Percent
Recovery of operations and maintenance cost of water services	13	22.4
Recovery of capital costs associated with system improvements	10	17.2
Recovery of overhead and administrative costs of water services	10	17.2
Funding for future capital improvements	8	13.7
Affordability for low/fixed income customers	7	12
Simplicity of implementing/executing rate change	3	5.1
Stability or even-ness of monthly revenue flow	2	3.4
Ease in passing City Council or other political approval process	2	3.4
Conservation of water	2	3.4
Incentives to specific customer groups for economic development	1	1.7

The summaries of water rate information from all three sites present an opportunity for communities and water managers to compare the relative position of their rate charges and rate structures to those of other systems. While such comparison is certainly valuable, several cautions are recommended when interpreting the results presented here. First, the rates and rate considerations employed by each water system are likely to be closely associated with their particular operating characteristics of each system (i.e. system size, water source, ownership, etc.) and current overall financial status. Wherever possible, available information on water system characteristics guide comparisons. Next, the water rates compared in the study are often not the only source of revenue generation employed by water systems. Other fees, charges, and aid collected by the systems influence their water rates.

Our findings as illustrated on table 16 also indicate that respondents tended to agree or strongly agree with three statements. First, 94 percent agreed that the cost of providing water services to their area is increasing. However, only about 41 percent of respondents believed that costs were rising faster than the prices charged for water. Second, 91 percent of respondents felt that their current water charges are affordable to all customers in their respective service areas, and 42 percent of respondents believed that their current rate design would work well anywhere in the country. Third, more than 80 percent of the respondents felt that water rates need to be updated on a regular basis. However, it is interesting to point out

that almost 40 percent of respondents agreed that revisions to water rates and rate structures are so difficult that updates are not done as frequently as they should be. It is necessary to emphasize that this was mostly the view of the management committee.

Table 17 : Agreement/disagreement with statements about current water tariff and current rate setting framework

Statements about Current rate	Responded	Strongly disagree	disagree	Agree	Strongly agree	No opinion
The rate structure was a compromise	57	12.7%	23.7%	37%	4.6%	22%
Several versions were proposed before a final rate structure was approved	57	13.7%	23.4%	41.7%	7.4%	13.7%
The current rate structure penalizes low water users	57	31.1%	38.4%	13%	1.7%	15.8%
The current rate structure penalizes high water users	57	6.8%	11.9%	35.2%	7.4%	38.6%
Your current rate design would work well just about anywhere in the country	58	0.6%	5.1%	60.7%	21.3%	12.4%
The cost of providing water services to your area is increasing	57	0%	1.1%	53.1%	40.7%	5.1%
Water rates need to be updated on regular bases	57	0.6%	1.1%	48.6%	42.4%	7.3%
Revisions of water rates and rates structures are so difficult	56	10.7%	31.1%	25.4%	13.6%	19.2%
The cost of water services in your area is increasing faster than the prices that are charged for water	56	3.4%	28.8%	28.2%	13.0%	26.6%

One statement with which the respondents strongly disagreed was that their current rate structure penalizes low water use customers in the bulk water users. This on the contrary is observed in the pro-poor strategies adopted in both communities. This result is understandable considering the prevalence of uniform block water rates. The responses to other statements tended to be divided or neutral. For example, the respondents were essentially split on whether the current rate represented a compromise and slightly more respondents were able to express an opinion and agree that several versions of the current structure were proposed before it was approved.

Several questions in the survey were designed to obtain information about the respondents' assessment of the water pricing objectives that are accomplished by their current rate. These objectives included economic efficiency, social (community) objectives, fairness, revenue sufficiency and stability, administrative simplicity, water conservation and political feasibility. The survey responses are summarized on table 17.

In the case of Kumbo for those using water from public tap stands, we realized some sort of cross subsidy. Since an equal sum is shared to everyone attached to each tap stand the high water consumers are subsidized by the low consumers. In an additional follow-up question about the efficiency objective, the respondents were asked to indicate what kinds of cross-subsidies were present from a pre-defined list of potential subsidies. We identified two types of subsidies that were indicated by the respondents. The most frequently acknowledged subsidy in Bali was that "transnational associations" subsidize home customers. The situation was different in Kumbo; for those using bulk water, most of the respondents believed that low water users subsidize high water users. Since at the end of the month bills are shared equally to all those tied to a particular tap stand meaning some consumers could be "free riders".

Social or community objectives are sometimes promoted through water pricing. When asked to rate the success they had had in achieving social and community objectives on a scale from 1 to 10, nearly 60 percent of those respondents who were able to formulate a response provided a rating of 8 or greater, which indicates a general feeling of success in meeting rate setting goals that involve a broader social focus.

Table 18 : Accomplishing set objectives

Rating	Objective 1		Objective 2		Objective 3	
	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%
1 Does not accomplish	3	8.1	5	22.7	3	13.6
2	0	0	1	4.5	0	0
3	2	5.4	1	4.5	2	9
4	1	2.7	1	4.5	0	0
5	2	5.4	2	9	4	18.1
6	3	8.1	0	0	2	9
7	4	10.8	2	9	1	4.5
8	7	18.9	4	18.1	2	9
9	10	27	3	13.6	3	13.6
10 Fully accomplished	5	13.5	3	13.6	5	22.7
Total	37		22		22	

The main purpose of charging customers for water is to raise the revenues needed to operate a water system. In our survey for more precision from respondents, they were asked to rank the adequacy of their current rate structures in generating enough revenue to recover total annual costs (operations and maintenance; overhead and administrative; capital improvement/debt service): a ranking of 1 meant that the rate structure does not generate enough annual revenue;

a ranking of 5 was used to represent a situation where the rate structure is currently generating sufficient revenues, but it is anticipated that this structure will not generate sufficient revenues in the near future. Finally, a ranking of 10 was designated to mean that the current rate structure is generating enough revenue to meet or exceed total annual costs.

Table 19 : Ranking of water rates in terms of economic efficiency

Rating	Number	%	Response rate	Number	%
1 Not Efficient	2	3.5	No answer	14	33.4
2	1	1.7	Responded	46	76.6
3	5	8.9	Total surveys	60	100
4	4	7.1			
5	5	8.9			
6	9	16			
7	9	16			
8	1	19.6			
9	7	12.5			
10 Most Efficient	3	5.3			
Total	46				

The results indicate that 51 percent of respondents agreed their rate produced sufficient revenues (rank 8 or greater). Almost 30 percent of respondents provided a rating of 5 or less, indicating that their revenues were inadequate or would soon be insufficient. Economists describe prices as the “signal” to consumers of cost. In water systems, price is often considered to be the most important signal to consumers to use water wisely. Water rates can be designed to charge users who are thought to be wasting the resource a higher price for water.

Water rates apply to a broad customer coverage. Therefore, rate setting can become a process of political compromise in which the ability of getting a rate passed by a city council or similar elected governing board is the key factor in a rate design. The respondents were asked to indicate the degree of political influence that was experienced in designing their current rate structure. A rating of 1 was used to indicate that no political considerations were involved, while a rating of 10 was used to indicate that political acceptability was the sole objective in rate design. It is necessary to indicate that this question was intentional to get the present opinion of the communities after the period of political rivalry which greatly affected the management of the Kumbo and Bali water supplies especially. The results indicate that approximately one third of the respondents reported no political influence whatsoever in the rate design and approval process. Seventeen percent of respondents indicated a high degree of

political influence (indicated by the sum of rating of 8 and higher). The rest (nearly 50%) indicated a moderate level of political influence. Meanwhile, the Bali population seems to be more affected by the political unrest than Kumbo.

Also, water conservation as a rate setting objective is not a strong consideration in the ratemaking process for most of the sample systems. Water conservation received a mean weight of 2 percent out of 100 (as compared to the weight of 55 percent for the cost recovery objective). Approximately one third of the respondents reported no political influence whatsoever in the current rate design and approval process. A moderate level of political influence was indicated by approximately one quarter of respondents.

The data from the 3 sites illuminates many interrelated issues related to ratemaking practices, processes, and perceptions. The results indicate that the three community water supply systems consider multiple objectives in establishing water rates, chief among them is the recovery of costs associated with operations, capital, and overhead costs of water supply. Other important objectives are securing funding for future capital improvements, and affordability of water service for low and fixed income customers. Several of the objectives that are frequently mentioned in the literature on water pricing were not rated high by the survey respondents. The most frequently acknowledged subsidy was that "outside city" customers subsidize "inside city" customers for the case of Bali main water supply. Meanwhile low water consumers cross subsidized high water consumers in Kumbo.

In summary, the results of the survey of ratemaking practices provide important insights into the current practice of developing and implementing water rates by community water systems in Cameroon. Recovery of costs associated with operations, capital, and overhead costs is a chief objective among those evaluated in the survey. On a standardized weighting scale, recovery of costs received a weight of 55 percent out of 100. A majority of respondents indicated that their rates produced sufficient revenues, but almost 30 percent indicated their revenues are inadequate or soon to be insufficient.

Going beyond the cases studied in this research, majority of community water systems apply the same water tariff to all customers and send bills for water service every month. Nearly 60 percent of systems in the North West Region for example use a single rate and a small percent bill their customers monthly (Kumbo and Bali are in this category). However, a significant

number of systems, especially larger systems serving larger populations, have two or more rates, which are applied to different classes of customers they serve. On average, these systems use approximately four different rate classes, which typically include private subscribers, bulk water users (pro-poor), commercial water users' rates.

An overwhelming majority of respondents agreed that the cost of water is rising and almost half believe that costs are rising faster than water prices. Still, more than 90 percent of respondents felt that their current water charges are affordable to all their customers in their respective service areas. Almost 40 percent of respondents believed that revisions to water rates and rate structures are so difficult that updates are not done as frequently as they should be.

Only a small fraction of systems identify subsidies across customer classes. This result is understandable considering the prevalence of uniform water rates. The most frequently acknowledged subsidy is geographical in nature; a few "outside city" customers subsidize "inside city" customers. Relatively few systems considered getting past the political approval process as a rate setting objective or consideration. The respondents were essentially split though on whether the current rate represented a compromise and slightly more respondents were able to express an opinion and agree that several versions of the current structure were proposed before it was approved.

All along we have been trying to assess the management of community water supplies in the Cameroon Western Highlands. We can understand from the above analysis that despite the fact that Cameroonian communities are trying to meet their water needs by adopting and adjusting to various accessibility strategies, water accessibility figures are still very low. Strategies vary from doubted water sources like wells in Bafou to different community hybrids in Kumbo and Bali. We can summarize our research questions into one main question; is there a possibility of having a single effective model in Cameroon? Instantly following our analysis the answer is seemingly no, reasons being that the Cameroonian society is too diversified. Nevertheless, we realized that most countries that have homogeneous water governance systems today had once been considered as very heterogeneous. We used the case of France presented by Haghe (2005) to show that there are possibilities of creating organized institutions from diversified models.

7.5 Going beyond the case of Cameroon

Based on the reasoning defended throughout our thesis, we have put forward the view that the main problem hindering water governance in Cameroon is the fragmentation of the water sector institutions and the heterogeneity of its society. There are always difficulties linking the local institutions with the national water framework. In the preceding chapters, we have presented the difficulties of creating and maintaining models through the different community management hybrids adopted by the various communities studied. Subsequently, we analyzed the difficulties for possible cohabitation between communities and other water partners while showing a particular reluctance of communities accepting partnerships with the state.

In the preceding subsection we have elaborated on the hinges in establishing water prices. All attempts proposing possibilities of having effective governance models in Cameroon is met by obstacles. Coming back to our research question which we summarized as: how could the actors be combined within a coherent and integrated framework considering the complexity of the communities? We thought looking at the Cameroon water governance problem confined to Cameroon seemed too closed to us. It is necessary we look at the cases of societies that have succeeded in having models that they master. What guided our analysis was Haghe's[91] reflection where he presents the evolution of the French water sector. From his analysis we can readily conclude that putting in place a model is a long and tedious process which should be accompanied by the necessary means (financial, technical, human, etc). In his paper he distinguishes three main periods:

A period he termed as revolutionary with the putting in place of a new legislation and an administrative rationing strategy with water changing status radically from a primary resource to an economic good. The second period is from 1800 to 1860 where institutions were designed to take care of the different water resources. Third, the 1880-1910 period with the increase in the intrinsic value of water. What we can retain from his analysis is the enforcement of radical laws and the change of status of water and the putting into place of new institutions. This method seems to us the only way of implementing widely applied laws and decisions. The lesson here is that in France for example attaining the present stable water prices or effective water governance is preceded by periods of serious instability and radical

[91] Les Débuts de la marchandisation de l'eau en France au XIXe siècle : enjeux et acteurs. In Baron Catherine (2005) Société Civile et Marchandisation de l'eau.

decision making. This reflection brings the following question. Is it possible to transfer this step by step approach applied by France to the Cameroonian society?

It's rather a hard question to answer, but basically there are some prerequisites. Following the three periods outlined by Haghe, we can clearly distinguish some tendencies which to us form the baseline of the model that was adopted in France. To adopt an integrated approach to water management there was firstly the recognition of the intrinsic value of water as an economic good and its integration in the market economy. In addition, France created a new legislative system acknowledging water as an economic good. Furthermore, there was a complete reorganization of the water sector hereby disrupting old structures and perceptions as perceived from this citation.

"…*Les années 1960 sont toujours présentées comme déterminantes pour cette évolution dans les pays industrialisés car c'est alors qu'un puissant lobby scientifique, industriel et financier a pu imposer ses normes sur cet espace encore perçu comme largement gratuit. Il est vrai que cette période est importante, car riche en transformation et ruptures…pourtant une mise en perspective historique dans le cadre de la France montre que les transformations des années 1960 ne sont que l'aboutissement d'un processus progressif d'intégration au marché* ».

We are aware of the fact that making such comparisons can be daring because the two settings (Cameroon and France) differ but there exist a common point; both are complex. Meanwhile it is interesting to note that the present system in France started off since the early 19th C. It was not until 1960 that the water sector actually had a well defined model[92]. It is certain it still undergoes adjustments with the changing environmental, economic and social evolutions. Despite the fact that the objectives and means were well defined we should note that it still took more than a century and a half to reach stable governance.

What interests us in this author's reasoning is the fact that he presents the French society as diverse at one time with multiple disintegrated water management models, which rendered governance difficult. It is also worth noting that, he uses terms like "revolutionary" "rupture" in the implementation process which to us signify radical changes. Taking the case of

[92] Hubert Bonin elaborates on the French model in his article entitled "Le modèle français de capitalisme de l'eau dans la compétition européenne et mondiale depuis les années 1990 ; In Baron Catherine (2005) Société Civile et Marchandisation de l'eau.

Cameroon, one of these revolutionary acts to take is avoiding Chiefs and chieftaincy. This according to us is an important step towards disrupting the Western Highland communities with social organizations that hinder governance. Meanwhile we caution that such radical acts or reforms should be accompanied by the necessary resources (finances, social, providing the services at affordable rates etc) to satisfy the society's needs. As proven from preceding chapters, the society can react violently and disrupt the implementation of the reforms if they don't meet their needs. However if the state meets resistance, the revolts are not always directly linked to the water reforms but rather to the inability of the state to ensure social, economic and political security. The atmosphere is that of general mistrust against the state.

From the above analysis new questions do arise, that of the state fully assuming its role as a regulator by creating an enabling environment to either cohabit with the informal sector and Chiefs or completely avoid them.

Conclusion

In the light of the experiences in the three cases, it appears that community water supplies will continue to be a key element in global water strategies. If they are to be effective and sustainable, then there remains a pressing need for a re-alignment of power via changes in institutional arrangements. These arrangements should be such that communities gain control over their resources and the process of implementation while the state maintains its role as the regulator. The major challenge therefore is not to accept the principle of integrating projects, but to learn how best to integrate. It is a task which requires a broad knowledge of issues relating to each component, considerable flexibility and patience plus a thorough understanding of the local cultural context. A good approach helps to reveal the impact of the drawdown and to avoid the stereotypical view that communities are homogenous 'institutions' willing and able to manage resources on the basis of demand. Instead, it focuses on the effective partnerships as the basis for the success (or otherwise) of community capacity to create the necessary capital to work with their partners. Both formal and informal institutions are important, particularly at the community and municipal level.

Effective partnerships between implementators and communities are of even greater importance if projects are to prove sustainable. As noted above, sustainability depends crucially on communities' willingness to take responsibility for operation and maintenance of schemes. This depends in turn on the extent in which the community participated during the stages of planning and implementation. Different actors (they are the community, donors, implementing agencies; which may be government, though it is increasingly nongovernmental and external donors) in community water supplies have their objectives. The objectives are distinctive sets of cultural, social and economic values which broadly guide their approaches to projects and misunderstanding and undervaluing of which are common causes of dispute and poor projects.

Conclusion of Part III

In this part, I have made two separate but linked arguments in reference to scale and interaction between the community and other institutions in the Cameroon Western Highlands urban water supplies. In the first section, I traced the role played by scale – political, economic, and social – in the events that have led up to the current municipal water governance situation, arguing that the current and fragile arrangement is the result of communities' strategic engagement with different scales of governance. As illustrated, there are numerous scales and they are at times socially constructed and in a constant process of re-negotiation. This observation provides a useful lens through which can be viewed the implications of the water committees' scalar engagement for the idea of community – which, as I mentioned earlier, is often associated with local-level governance. With social organization we are referring to the formation and organization of the civil society to meet common objectives. Although each town's water supply is technically small scale, they are also creating new scales (such as jumping scales through partnerships and NGOs), and envisioning a multi-scalar system of water governance. All of these maneuvers represent deliberate manipulations of scale, through processes as diverse as open conflict, inter-institutional networking (both formal and informal), and discursive enactment. They demonstrate the degree to which the water committees – and communities in general – are not necessarily "fixed" at the local scale. This we can see by looking at the political and socio-economic dimension water problems can take.

In addition, I looked at proposed long-term solutions to water problems in the Western Highlands, showing how their efforts to maintain/re-construct municipal power relations employ scalar arguments that are in constant articulation with international water governance paradigms and constructions of regional and indigenous identity. This argument speaks to the regional and temporal associations of scales of governance. In a sense, it is difficult or even impossible to speak about a scale of water governance – be it the city, or the municipality – without referencing a specific configuration of international "best practices" rhetoric, local interests, and pre-existing management structures. "Multi-scalar" governance with well defined levels is hard to see.

GENERAL CONCLUSION

In various guises, interactions between "community" and "water governance" have risen to the political forefront in Cameroon. My goal in this thesis has been to consider community water governance in this context, wherein communities fighting for natural resources helped bring about a putatively liberal era that is, in turn, marked by a discursive interest in the ideas of community and water. Engaging community/stakeholders to participate in water management has been supported by a series of government policies for the management of water resources. The objective of this research was to understand and assess whether governance arrangements for water allocation and management in Cameroon are enhancing local (community) water supplies and fostering sustainability "on the ground". Through a case study of Cameroon Western Highlands water supply strategies, the thesis assessed the key governance arrangements and actors involved in water allocation, together with the dynamics of water use and availability and, the complex communities.

Taking the view that the existing governance regime in Cameroon is polycentric in nature – that responsibility for water allocation is dispersed among different centres of decision making at a number of scales – the work reflects an underlying interest in understanding the implications of polycentric governance regimes and sustainability of community water supplies. The architecture of Cameroonian water governance can also be seen as a patchwork of different institutions with different constituencies, spatial scopes, and subject matter.
Therefore, in everyday practices in the Cameroon Western Highlands, formal and informal boundaries often become blurred, as the actors' who are positioned in formal and informal institutions, their participation is directly influenced by the power dynamics operating at grassroots level (like chiefs and chieftaincy as defined in this dissertation). In the light of the above discussion relating to various contextual and contested issues characterizing, community-based management interventions, I investigated the specific issues arising from community participation in these interventions.

This reason was enhanced by the diversity of the small town communities within this region, with study sites selected from both Francophone and Anglophone parts. Second, the governance regime in this region consists of a set of nested arrangements operating at different scales (i.e. regional, municipal and small town communities) that involve the participation of government and non-government actors. This arrangement provided an

opportunity to understand how the various elements of a polycentric and collaborative governance regime co-exist.

Several theoretical approaches guided this study, one of which is the governance typology. Developed as part of the analysis, this perspective has enabled a broad definition of stakeholders in terms of their relative ***power*** (influence), ***legitimacy*** (interest) and ***interests***.
This thesis investigated the micro realities of Western Highland community members by exploring their everyday interactions and negotiations within various water-related groups formed in small towns around community-based water management. The thesis explored how socio-cultural factors influence the various water-related community groups in negotiating, gaining access to and controlling the benefits of community-based water management. To that broader end, my research has been structured by three questions.

First, I asked "How can communities and organizations be established in semi urban and rural regions of the Western Highlands of Cameroon, based on participation and sustainability principles? Or, how should the different underlying objectives of all the actors (e.g. social equity, economic efficiency, and environmental conservation) be combined within a coherent and integrated implementation framework considering the complexity (diversity) of the communities"?
This is based within a more complex framework of "formal" and "informal" institutions and organizations of water management with conflictive negotiations over access to water embedded, and how do the framing institutions shape the negotiating processes?
The second research question explores the approach to water from the actor's level. It takes into account that the negotiation processes are not solely shaped by institutions, but have to be placed in a web of power relations where access mechanisms and the actors influence governance strategies.
"Subsequently, we asked how can the powers and accountability framework of local actors (all stakeholders) be guided to ensure efficient and sustainable projects? A question which could also be translated as "What are the different strategies developed by individuals or group actors to control, enforce or secure their access to water resources?
These questions had to do with the material impact of politics on water governance on community water supplies and vice versa. This question was also central throughout the dissertation, where I explored the concept of governance with much emphasis on its elements (multi faceted problems, multi scale, and multi-instrumental) the scale issue in the quest for

sustainable governance. Subsequently, I compared actually existing community governance to its idealized counterpart by evaluating the extent to which the Western Highland chiefs can be considered autonomous. The implication of these questions for my purpose was to examine the friction between state politics and actually existing community water governance.

In this study the actor-oriented approach is used, because it provides a set of analytical tools useful for describing and analyzing changes in patterns of social action and interaction, as well as institutional arrangements, where such changes are a function of human agents, the social and material conditions under which they act and interact and agency-structure dynamics. This approach is useful in this study because it addresses the question of social differences and provides specific concepts and analytical tools for the study of community participation and the role of human agency in the processes involved in social interaction, both of which shape access to natural resources.

Finally, the actor-oriented approach complements my study, which is ethnographic in nature, by investigating places and the roles actors (as groups or individuals in interaction processes) play and orchestrate to the best of their ability in certain circumstances. In addition, I investigate how communities were conceived and formed for intervention in order to achieve success in its functionality.

Despite numerous examples of neoliberal-community articulation in Cameroon, the idea of community governance is a central component of the government's post-neoliberal project. As discussed in Chapter 2, the government is pitching a particular conceptualization of community governance – in between indigenous values and state structures – as an alternative to neoliberal governance. Is this a false alternative, given that community governance is not incompatible with neoliberal rule?

Within this debate, the idea of community autonomy plays a central role. By definition, an autonomous community is capable of making decisions regarding its day-to-day internal operations and long-term development plans independently from the influence of outside entities, be they NGOs, the state, or private actors. For the proponents of community governance, including both alter globalization activists and more mainstream developmentalists, autonomy can be imagined as a necessary precursor to positive governance outcomes. For critics, particularly those who interpret community as supplemental to the

neoliberalization of water governance, autonomy can be depicted as the ultimate manifestation of neoliberalization. But to what extent can a community be truly autonomous, given the hybridity frequently experienced between communities and the broader socio-political context?

The answer to that question may be different in rural and urban contexts. Examples of autonomous community governance are drawn, more often than not, from rural and often indigenous areas. Our examples include small towns in the Cameroon Western Highlands .In peri-urban and small towns, community resource governance is less geographically isolated. As explored in this dissertation, small town community-run water systems operate alongside a multitude of other providers: public and/or private municipal systems, legally sanctioned bottled water sellers, informal venders, private industries with their own wells, and private household wells.

Water users interact with a host of non-community actors simply by virtue of the densely interwoven networks that define urban environments, and many of these non-community actors can come to play important supporting roles for the community system. I focus on the impact of such interactions on the internal governance patterns of community-run water systems in small towns in the Cameroon Western Highlands, which I contend are non-autonomous hybrid entities, and the corresponding implications for conceptualizations of community governance.

While increased reliance on outside actors does not negate community actions – the decision to approach, for example, was conscious and consensually reached – it is reflective of a change in governance strategy. Of the three sites, two systems were built and are being maintained with outside assistance. The water committees' ongoing relationship with the municipal government influences decision-making process, shifting their response to water problems from an inward gaze to an outward gaze. However, I argue that the community-public- NGO articulation makes community governance process less autonomous and more relational. It also calls for a re-conceptualization of community governance that recognizes this inter-institutional dependence.

These points, however, do not negate the fact that relational community governance is not necessarily positive, but it does present an inconsistency between activist rhetoric about

community governance and its reality. Community governance involves many more actors than those who live within the neighborhood's borders, a fact whose acknowledgment might result in a more realistic depiction of alternative municipal water governance.

It can be summarized that the Cameroon Western Highlands is deeply rooted in the socio-political artifacts of water-related practices. Water occupies a central place in the life of the people as various water sources have social, ecological and institutional principles governing their use. Furthermore, social relations and differences are centered on water arrangements. In addition to this, water issues in the village are in juxtaposition with gender, wealth, politics and power. Social fabric, institutional arrangements and social hierarchies symbolize heterogeneity within the village.

The small towns communities studied cannot be seen as a 'whole unified community', as it has many layers around it in the form of caste, class, gender, ethnicity and wealth. Local traditional hierarchies are still very much prevalent and determine individual's position in the village's social structure, water management, access and distribution. They are also being altered and challenged through gender, politics and wealth. The material fact of wealth can be seen when people become members of the water committee, or in other various water groups, by participating in the groundwater market. Development associations as an identity is a form of social organization and remains significant in the Cameroon Western Highlands. Socio-political hierarchies conditioned by wealth and ownership lead to disparity in terms of water access and management. Access to and control over water influences participation and decision-making processes as well as the institutional structure that regulates access. Water management is dominated by power relations in terms of access, distribution, ownership and participation in water-related arrangements. Whether it is the government- or NGO-operated water-related programmes like hand pumps, borewells, dug wells, watersheds or the piped water supply scheme, all follow the same claims of ownership. Socio-political inequalities lead to inequity in access to water, as the poor are excluded from water access. Hence, water access is directly related to power and wealth.

Finally, government institutions add indirectly to the inequity by ignoring the social undercurrents of power relations linked to social and economic hierarchies. Therefore, power plays a dominant role in influencing every other aspect such as gender, landholding, ownership of borewells, access to technology, the water market, the water systems, user

groups, etc. In a better way, this also provides an entry point to contestations, cooperation and negotiations in water management. The issue of power provides a further set of contradictions that we questioned within the domain of social organisation around borewells and diverse property rights.

Moreover, the separation of roles between formal and informal institutional structures in the intervention context is not entirely clear. They have always been interwoven, as the actors who engaged in both these realms do not separate them in the true sense.

For example, the traditional leaders, and municipalities engaged with each other, and with external actors like the implementing NGO. In practice, there are inter-linkages and overlaps that make the boundaries very fluid as well as conflicting between the formal and informal institutions. In the Cameroon Western Highland communities, a diverse set of social, economic, cultural and power dynamics operating in a given society influence relations between formal and informal water management institutions. Evidence from the three small towns proved that there is coexistence and cooperation between formal and informal institution structures in the intervention setting, whereby community-based actors constantly interacted and negotiated with each other through their power relations.

Social networks and civil society play an important role in human interactions, and are made up of direct and indirect relationships and exchanges. In addition, various types of social networks are used to achieve a particular goal or action. For example, networks were used to carry out specific collective action for the maintenance of water prices. Consequently, user group members become 'collective actors'– those who at any given moment have the same common goals, situations and interests and agree tacitly or unambiguously to follow a definite course of social action. Thus, 'collective actors' are attributed as having power of agency, along with the capacity to make decisions and implement them; moreover, they can be formally or informally constituted and strategically organized.

In the property regimes of water, water belongs to common property and is accessed and used more as private property by those who own borewells. It is suggested that the water access depends on social structure, social norms and practices deeply embedded in traditions.

Imagined vs. Actual: Spatial and Temporal Embeddedness of Communities

We analyzed all the stakeholders involved in water governance in the context of community water management in Cameroon, in order to generate and integrate information about: individuals, groups and institutions that will be affected by and should benefit from the management of water and related resources; and secondly, individuals, groups and institutions that can influence and contribute to the management of water schemes. The most notable issues found in the study include unclear/overlapping stakeholder roles and responsibilities, disparity among formal stakeholder roles and actual practices, lack of effective feedback mechanisms and lack of coordination and participation at different levels of stakeholders in water management. Urgent improvements need to take place to gradually address those issues.

The concepts of water governance and the integration of municipalities as applied to Cameroon need to be undertaken carefully at the local level and should take into account the existing political, cultural, socio-economic and physical features of the specific area. Although the Cameroon government has moved towards decentralization at sub-national levels, it is still slow in the water governance sector and it needs time to reach the desired goals. Effective coordination and feedback among concerned stakeholders was found hard to achieve in all sites. Much needs to be done in terms of the physical infrastructure of existing schemes.

We noted that the full spectrum of influences from communities influence the design of institutions and organizations, and the way they implement in the practices of day-to-day water management. Governance is therefore not solely the domain of the State nor is it confined to a particular scale or arena; it emerges from the interactions between State, business, and not-for-profit players at multiple scales. In this light we examined the different forms of governance and their main limits. Regardless of the governance definitions, it is evident that Cameroon small town communities (especially the new civil society) occupy a central role in the water governance and the establishment of management processes. While examining the different dimensions of the concept that can develop good governance structures we suggest a need to understand the reality and the complexity of different stakeholder interests and relations. The complex institutional set up at the national levels also inhibits participatory decision making. For instance, the Cameroon water sector lies across ministries; this is a barrier that limits the participation of many actors in the governance

process. Deference to political and administrative power is embedded in Cameroonian society, where traditional leaders are known to the community. This kind of power interaction reflects the challenges that state authorities face regarding the implementation of rules and regulations. This complexity can be solved only by the effective involvement of both formal and informal local authority such as municipalities and Chiefs in the water management. Informal institutions themselves shape and are shaped by the everyday negotiations and power relations between diverse actors, whereas formal institutions represent rules that require third party enforcement and supposedly applied to all. As a result, the image of 'community institutions' in the context of community water management is incomplete if it overlooks the complex webs of interactions, informal institutions and contestations over resource control within groups from communities.

Having discussed the concept of community from various perspectives, it is evident that the images of community often seen in Cameroonian policies are a reflection of poor empirical reality, and are, as a consequence, a misleading guide to practical intervention strategies. A small town community is made up of diverse small social groups, each with different agendas and inspirations. This is not to dispute that they do have value in the current context of wider debates for achieving sustainable development goals, but there have been several studies in which "romanticized" representations of community and its implementation have shown successful results. Flaws within the process stem from the underlying assumptions that community is homogeneous and will work together for the overall development of the whole, and thus equity will be achieved.

From the example's studied we argue that understanding the reality behind policy facades, misconceptions about community capacities and roles, and the various competing and overlapping institutional relationships at a local level is essential to ensuring that coordination in water is more power-conscious, but also better able to adjust to the complex, heterogeneous nature of the "community environment". We realized that, at a basic level, almost all water provision involves politics to varying degrees.

Another limitation of the institutional thinking lies in an inadequate understanding of power relations. All schemes studied portray changing institutional forms and power relations. The main problem lies in the "relative power of different actors" in community dynamics. Local elites are capable of mobilizing, accumulating and investing in their already-owned social,

political and economic capital to hijack the projects. Even though this was felt in a lesser extent in Kumbo; with a relatively more organized management framework it holds true in Bali where the present manager is the nephew of the former.

In theory, Cameroonian municipalities hold legitimate roles in managing community water supplies, but do not have the power to regulate and manage water resources. It was observed that at scheme and catchment levels, municipalities' legal and administrative responsibility over schemes is not effective for many reasons including limited power and authority, limited support funds, inadequate capacity and lack of human resources. Additionally, there are few accountability mechanisms in the state governance structure, resulting in low levels of trust and poor public service delivery for most communities. In many schemes municipalities have abandoned their duties and even their interests. Initial decentralization processes of local governance sought to exclude and undermine traditional institutions by creating local government structures that were far removed from the communities that they purported to empower. Yet, traditional institutions were still highly regarded and their legitimacy in local level governance, particularly in issues relating to land and water resources, was also undisputed. Their exclusion sent signals heralding the failure of the concept of decentralization and community based management of water. I showed that, in their quest to be recognized as a suitable scale of urban water governance, over the last decade the water committees or boards alongside Chiefs have created an umbrella organization that enables them to function at the scale of the city, work with NGOs and national political leaders that allow them to jump scales to access networks of personal interest.

For this reason, actors like the Global Water Partnership Cameroon intend to work within the water boards through chiefs to provide appropriate mechanisms for coordinated water governance and management. Global Water Partnership Cameroon mediates in conflicts that arise from local water management schemes. We observed that conflicts relating to water allocation and pricing arise from what is perceived to be self-interest and lack of care for common property.

The formal governance system is challenged by the lack of a proper feed-back mechanism and coordination among concerned institutions. Also the functioning of vertical links (accountability) between the central government, provincial and local authorities and villages requires urgent improvement. An additional challenge is the aid dependency of the

Cameroonian governance system, and the dominance of donors, development banks and international NGOs in shaping government policies and introducing new approaches. Such dominance has also been clearly visible in the Western Highlands of Cameroon, including its different management initiatives.

Paradoxically, the apparent co-optation of traditional institutions into state structures jeopardize the success of decentralization and community management of water schemes as some people view the process as a political ploy to control small towns rather than a genuine act of effecting local level traditional management of resources. Also, some traditional leaders are likely to resist or accept their co-optation into state structures as it may also mean being co-opted into the ruling party structures.

Community Governance in a Liberal Context

What are the implications of these findings for conceptualizations of community in a putatively post-neoliberal context? How might the Cameroonian context challenge this dichotomous reading?

At the national level, weak legislation impedes clear division of responsibilities and rights. In addition, the interests of the government and local people collide and the mutual trust is low. As a whole, the weak private, social and research sectors and certain significantly strong ministries and political parties distort the configuration for national water governance. At the local level there is a growing competition on subsistence, which has already degraded the environment and, also created organized user communities. At all the regional levels, horizontal cooperation and coordination seem to be minimal and instead the vertical relations dominate. In general, the information flows poorly between all the levels.

The study demonstrates that any kind of community water-related intervention is building on and feeding into existing social and power relations. The advocates of community-based management projects tend to have this naïve assumption that just because a project is small, it will be egalitarian and successful, while the underlying assumption that actors' participation will be facilitated through the adoption of participatory approaches and by creating a participatory arena is misleading. This is because the goal of social equity is difficult to achieve, as actors are neither homogenous in composition and concerns nor necessarily harmonious in their relations.

The field study seems to suggest that community-based water management approaches have several potential social risks and dangers. In the case of the Cameroon Western Highlands, few people in the name of the development of the whole town manipulate development projects. This study argued that actor participation in the formal participatory arena and interaction in the Western Highlands water management context is shaped by the actors (we paid particular interest on the new civil society and chieftaincy) and networks, their relative power positions, interests and interactions. The findings confirm the assertions of actor-oriented scholars in that social action is actor-oriented and is at the same time embedded in the larger social setting that manipulates the choice of actors in a situated manner.

The community management model is loaded with complexity in its implementation. One of the most important critiques of community projects has been that different advocates visualize the word 'community' differently. As a result, it has become more of an abstract idea loaded with non-pragmatism and ambiguity. The past few decades have witnessed a growing number of projects for natural resource management with the word 'community' attached to them as a prefix. Different experiences and varied results in the field of community have led to various reactions from diverse quarters.

The internal structure of communities is the cause of conspicuous inequalities, which this study established, but it is not the only reason that hinders effective water governance. The findings from Cameroon reveal that there are diverse interpretations of community. The study demonstrates that any kind of community water-related intervention is building on and feeding into existing social and power relations. The advocates of community-based management projects tend to have this naïve assumption that just because a project is small, it will be egalitarian and successful, while the underlying assumption that actors' participation will be facilitated through the adoption of participatory approaches and by creating a participatory arena is misleading. This is because the goal of social equity is difficult to achieve, as actors are neither homogenous in composition and concerns nor necessarily harmonious in their relations.

In community interventions, decentralization has come to occupy a prominent place, whereby the state gives the responsibility for water management to the local community through institutions such as watershed committees and water associations. The advocates of

decentralization justify this concept on the grounds that it could lead to more participation, efficiency and equity; however, most of the efforts end up not increasing the negotiating power of the local community. Actors who take charge of these institutions tend to engage in constant negotiations and interactions while simultaneously participating directly and indirectly in formal institutions, like watershed committees, and in informal institutional structures such as local social networks. The formal participatory arenas and institutions created by the process of decentralization supposedly provide opportunities for marginalized community members to participate, but the power imbalance in each community did not guarantee "equitable participation". International donor initiatives for community interventions have less scope in their blueprint to accommodate the dynamic power relations that characterize a community, as participation in community projects is considered complete and real when it happens in the "formal arena". Nonetheless, in Cameroon the actors participating in these formal arenas do not have a social life just made simply of formal relations, interactions and negotiations alone. Hence, there is a need to understand what the 'informal' holds in the functioning of 'formal participatory arenas'.

A growing body of literature acknowledges the problematic policy and its implications, vis-à-vis ignoring the issue concerning the difference and portrayal of small town communities as homogenous and harmonious. Furthermore, there is a need to see the small town community as a heterogeneous body, consisting of different social actors who form various small groups in terms of caste, class and gender. They also have different, often conflicting, perceptions of and claims to resources. Thus, social differences, which are an important aspect in the community, are not stagnant but are fluid entities and interlinked with each other, structurally and symbolically. Such is the case of Cameroon Western highlands. The question of identity (to a particular town or village), apparently, is a foremost source of inequality in issues concerning water management, as water relations in the towns shape related practices and their management.

This study is partly a sociological study of micro-level analysis along the lines of the actor-oriented approach in a socially stratified context. The thesis has taken up the analysis of socio-cultural aspects affecting actors' participation and the strategies used in various water-related community groups' formal and informal participatory arenas of managing water. Chieftaincy and the rising civil society dynamics influence various water-related community groups.

More broadly stated, I argue that any conceptualization of community governance must be extremely attentive to the socio-political context in which it is being practiced and promoted. The water systems that I studied are institutional hybrids that involve multiple actors working at multiple scales with multiple social, political, and environmental goals. They retain, however, considerable agency in dictating the terms of their hybridity, as illustrated both by their active drawing-in of non-community actors and by their proposal for multi-scalar co-governance with municipalities and NGOs. This indicates an active experimentation with the idea of community governance; it is an ongoing re-interpretation and re-politicization of what "community" means in Cameroon today. This is a country wherein the majority of people have not historically benefited from electoral politics, regardless of their leaders in power, and the community exists as a platform from which citizens might challenge chronic marginalization (chapter 5). The idea of community must therefore be read contextually, its potential evaluated against its site-specific interpretation and deployment.

My argument about community governance is related to arguments that several scholars have made. Although Cameroon is often identified to applying liberal policies, its shift does not represent any sort of cohesive project. Instead, a variety groups within the country are experimenting with alternatives to liberalism that have all, to varying degrees, arisen from or been strengthened by the legacy of liberalism; community water governance represents one such experiment. These ventures are all spatially embedded, in that they are born through interaction with local socio-political arrangements, and temporally contingent, in that they represent the re-interpretation of aspects of previously dominant governance paradigms. The degree to which they can be considered progressive development models is, like that of community governance, dependent on their internal configurations and the ways that they are integrated into their broader regional and national political processes.

This multi-scalar vision thus involves the incorporation of numerous scales of governance with various temporal associations. In elaborating this plan, the water committees reveal not only their engagement with multiple scales, but also their engagement with regional water governance networks – and thus their spatial and temporal embeddedness in regional (or large scale) water politics (chapters 4 and 5). The embeddedness of the water committees speaks to the contextual specificity with which all cases of community governance must be treated: not only does this particular case deviate from alter-globalization expectations, but it is probable that most examples of community governance deviate as well. Of course, the

small town characteristics of my sites make spatial and historical embeddedness more observable; nevertheless, it seems likely that only a small minority of examples of community governance that could claim true spatial and temporal separation from their larger socio-political contexts.

Gaps and Future Research Directions

As in most surveys, difficulties were encountered during the data collection period, and several of these were similar across sites. One of the common problems encountered was limited time, as the questionnaires were quite long (it took many hours to complete one questionnaire and more hours to participate in Focus Group Discussions). We had to collect primary data from a considerable number of respondents in a very short period of time. In addition, the geographical location of catchment sites and other interesting sites (water project offices, etc) presented a difficulty, as many of them were sparsely distributed in remote areas of the different regions.

Generally we encountered reluctance on the part of decision-makers (at different levels; water user association, municipalities, elites) to cooperate and share information. This was one of the reasons why statistical data on finances are lacking and limits are reflection. There were also several instances when the respondents, especially those who have less esteem on researchers, failed to keep their initial interview appointments with us after all the arrangements had been made. They were either out of the office, on their farms or engaged in other "meaningful activities", or simply changed their minds and refused outright to be interviewed. A second round of appointments was therefore required. Extreme difficulty was also experienced in obtaining permission to interview decision-makers especially in Bali. For instance, in Bali, all the project workers (accountant, secretary, technicians, book keeper etc) refused to participate without prior appointment, and some gave vague answers and figures, underestimating values especially concerning sales and profits (showing loss over the years), because of fear that revealed information might be used against them as grounds for charges. Some were hesitant to share information because their integrators prohibit them from exposing it (particularly data on capital investment, costs, and returns). In such cases, we had to look for replacements in order to meet the targeted number of respondents. Even though we faced problems having information from part of the community which we observed was of a particular social class (richer), "the poor" on the other hand, were very much willing to share information, but had difficulty in recalling some of it, as they generally do not keep records of

their expenditures and costs. Respondents' difficulty in recalling information was a general problem in all study sites.

Moreover, the study is focusing on water governance, a sector which inarguably, is a very sensitive one used for political and economic purposes by the present government. In the political sphere, undermining the ability of communities to produce and/or to access water renders them destitute and dependent on the state or welfare agencies, such dependence makes them politically compliant. Water aid is used by the government of the day to portray the image of a caring government by claiming credit for mobilizing water aid and/or water security. At the same time, opposition groups often exaggerate the plight of the affected people in the hope that this will trigger anti-government public opinion to their political advantage. Against this background, caution has to be exercised in appraising accounts of the situation given by various groups and parties; for this reason, the fact that the accounts and perceptions maybe influenced by political considerations cannot be ruled out.

In addition, the period under scrutiny of necessity means that this is partly a historical study implying a heavy reliance on records of the institutions involved and the institutional memory of subjects at the community level. Depending on the organizational culture of the institutions involved, records dating back to 1950s/2001 may be hard to come by. Finally, institutional memory of subjects at the community level going back close to ten years may be scanty for since then, Cameroon experienced a peculiar history and the possibility that accounts are mixed up cannot be ruled out.

As already mentioned in the introductory part, the Western Highlands have a very strong cultural attachment. The culture and tradition of this region believes that, in order to conserve their tradition there are many things that should be kept secret. For instance I can remember how bad I usually felt when I could not see the secret societies my cousins (boys who were leaving with us) had the priviledge to see because only men have the right to. This point is to show that as a woman there are many things I witnessed in my community that I cannot describe. Most important to point out is the fact that even the men who have been initiated to see and participate in some rites in the Western Highland community are educated never to describe what they know. That aside I do not consider the ignorance to such information as a hindrance, but rather the mystery that will maintain our curiosity for as long as these communities portray these hidden aspects. We strongly hold that this aspect of communities

renders them cohesive to an extent and hard to break, meaning there exist so much like "states within the state".

The concept and application of community management in the Western Highlands is embedded in the politics of development at a local level. Competing narratives about ownership, rights to access, the political relationship to service provision, and the informal and formal roles played by different institutions create an environment that challenges the basic tenets of community management. The provision of an effective service can become hostage to local political patronage in the less than benign environment that can exist between neighbouring communities. Consequently, some cases are more successful than others.

In Cameroon, water governance is not a simple arena whereby the resource is a "political asset" that local politicians can manipulate in response to votes. The complex meanings attached to water beyond the simple idea that it is a livelihood asset can render the relationships between communities, households, and different water points, complex and beyond the realm of simple "material understandings" of natural resources. The case studies have shown how understanding the reality behind policy facades, misconceptions about community capacities and roles, and the various competing and overlapping institutional relationships at a local level is essential to ensuring that new programming in water is more power-conscious, but also better able to adjust to the complex heterogeneous nature of the "community environment".

At a basic level, almost all water provision involves politics to varying degrees. The very process of shifting policy perspectives and approaches at the national level through legislation and policy development shuffles the institutional array at subsequent, lower levels. This changing array challenges established access routes to power and influence, and affects the balance between competing claims to legitimacy, whether in group affiliation, financial control, or in terms of party alignment. Addressing political aspects in water provision will ensure a more informed milieu in which to establish forms of community management that are adjusted and adjustable to local environments.

While writing this thesis, I encountered numerous avenues that I could have taken, but had to pass over in the interest of time and precision. It would be interesting, as a point of analysis, to better study the socio-cultural practices centered around water accessibility and the kind of

effects it has on the local community in terms of health and sanitation issues as well as the reconstruction of the society. This is a micro level study, which takes into account the socio-cultural context of small town communities rather than a broader picture of the state. Hence, it would be an important hypothesis to attempt to test not only socio-cultural, but also political and economic aspects of the Western Highlands in the main theoretical framework.

Based on this research review, there are a number of future areas for research that we propose. We recommend investigating further: how to harness opportunities to co-learn with communities through community-led research platforms for co determining, creating and directing research agendas with other partners such as universities, governments and civil society actors. Better understanding and less conflictual interpretations of social capital or the society (community) that lead to more politicized forms of collective action. The kinds of values that underpin responses to multiple and complex challenges, especially those related to social justice and equality. The successes, failures and lessons in dealing with challenges such as, established patterns of inequality and power imbalances especially in relation to service provision. How communities respond to challenges from established vested political interests, the state, police and the popular media in terms of co-optation, intimidation, infiltration, biased reporting, paternalism, dependency cultures. The tensions between integration and withdrawal in terms of community resilience. The different relations and reactions to the state that emerge (engagement, withdrawal, antagonism) as communities respond to crisis.

It would also be worth exploring a comparative study based on more sites (villages, peri urban, small towns and other countries), and looking into the different mechanisms by which socio cultural, economic, political and religious affiliation play a role in explaining water governance. Specifically, I plan to explore the ways that community structures are interacting in the current socio- economic and political context, and how identities associated with each are being mobilized for specific political economic purposes. This avenue of inquiry could continue to focus on water committees, but it could also be interestingly applied to other sites, which not only draw on both forms of social organization but also often have contradictory attitudes towards other natural resources.

Final Reflections

In this thesis, I have launched two parallel arguments with respect to community water governance in Cameroon. First, the community-centric rhetoric that forms the backbone of the government's liberal rhetoric is not transferred on the field. Second, actually-existing community water governance is marked by internal governance practices and long-term negotiation strategies that challenge idealized visions of community governance conjured by the Cameroonian government, activists, and NGOs. In this final section, I have also considered the implications of these arguments for conceptualizations of community governance in Cameroon.

Although community, as numerous scholars have pointed out, is an ambiguous concept whose celebration could unintentionally reify inequalities entrenched through neoliberal policies, I have attempted to salvage some of the political potential of (hybrid) community water governance. There is a point at which the mutability of liberal policies – and their progressive potential (Ferguson 2009) – must be recognized, and that point varies considerably between sites. As Zibechi puts it: "Community does not merely exist, it is made" (Zibechi 2010: 14). And if it is made, it can be re-interpreted, re-configured, and re-made.

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Law N° 2004/19 of July 22, 2004 to lay Down Rules applicable to regions.

Law No 2006/004 of July 14, 2006 to lay down conditions governing the election of regional councillors.

Loi n° 2004/017 du 22 juillet 2004 portant orientation de la décentralisation

Loi n° 98 /005 du 14 Avril 1998 portant régime de l'eau

Appendices

Appendix 1: QUESTIONNAIRE ON WATER RATES AND RATE-MAKING IN BALI AND KUMBO COMMUNITY WATER SUPPLIES

FIRST AND SECOND FIELD STUDY PHASES (November 2009 to March 2010, and from July 2011 to October 2011)

The questionnaire consists of 13 multiple choice questions related to characteristics of the different water schemes' charges and the process that was followed to determine the present charges

Please read each question carefully, answer the questions to the best of your knowledge and understanding of the situation at your water system.

We will welcome any comments that you may have. Please feel free to write in the margins of the survey.

System managers often consider multiple criteria when developing their water rates.

Which of the criteria below were considered in the development of your current structure of water charges, (please tick all that apply)

-A. Affordability for low income customers
-B. Incentives to specific customer groups for economic development purposes
-C. Stability or even-ness of monthly revenue flow
-D. Recovery of operations and maintenance cost of water services
-E. Simplicity of implementing/executing rate change
-F. Recovery of capital costs associated with system improvements
-G. Funding for future capital improvements
-Other 1(please specify) _____
-Other 2 (please specify) _____

2. Please rank the importance of the criteria that you identified in Question 1

Use a scale of 1 to 5, where 1 is the lowest importance and 5 is the most important. If items are equally important then assign them the same ranking ***(please circle the appropriate ranking number for each criteria identified in Question 1)***

1 2 3 4 5 Affordability for low income customers
1 2 3 4 5 Incentives to specific customer groups for economic development purposes
1 2 3 4 5 Stability or even-ness of monthly revenue flow
1 2 3 4 5 Recovery of operations and maintenance cost of water services
1 2 3 4 5 Simplicity of implementing/executing rate change
1 2 3 4 5 Recovery of capital costs associated with system improvements
1 2 3 4 5 Funding for future capital improvements
1 2 3 4 5 Other 1(please specify) _____
12 3 4 5 Other 2 (please specify) _____

Please answer the following questions that went into the development of your latest water rate structure

a.) How many years, months or weeks did it take to develop your current rate? Estimate the time from the first recognition of the need for change until the final rate change was approved

_____ YEARS OR _____MONTHS _____ OR WEEKS

b.) How many people (institutions) were involved in designing your current water rate?

_____ People

c.) If a professional consultant or technical assistance organization provided you with rate-making advice, please write the name of the organization providing this assistance below. If you received no assistance check NONE.

_____ ☐ NONE

d.) How many people (institutions) were involved in designing your current water rate?

_____ People

e.) Were these mainly the people who designed the rate? NO ——— YES ———

f.) Please provide your best estimate (in CFAF) for your current water rate CFAF _____

4. Please rank your agreement/disagreement with the following statements.

Circle *ONE* answer for each statement: Strongly Disagree (SD), Disagree (D), Neither agree nor disagree (N), Agree (A), Strongly Agree (SA)

The current rate structure was a compromise	SD	D	N	A	SA
Several versions were proposed before a final rate was approved	SD	D	N	A	SA
The current rate structure penalizes high water use customers	SD	D	N	A	SA
The current rate would work well just about anywhere in the country	SD	D	N	A	SA
The current water charges are affordable to all customers in your area	SD	D	N	A	SA
The cost of providing water services to your area is increasing	SD	D	N	A	SA
Water rates need to be updated on regular basis	SD	D	N	A	SA
Revision of water rates are so difficult that updates are not done as frequently as should be	SD	D	N	A	SA
The cost of providing water services to your area is increasing faster than the prices that are charged for water	SD	D	N	A	SA

Water rate is judged to be "economically efficient" if the price customers pay for water is just equal to the cost of supplying this amount of water.

Using this "cost" definition of "efficiency", rank the efficiency of your current water rate (circle ranking)

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Very efficient Completely Efficient

If you ranked your water rate in question 5 with a score of 8 or less please indicate whether this inefficiency is a result of: ***(circle one of the following statements)***

The cost of supplying the billing unit of water is MORE than what a customer generally pays for this unit, OR

The cost of supplying the billing unit of water LESS than what a customer generally pays for this unit

Social or community objectives are sometimes promoted through water pricing.

Examples of these objectives include:

-water rates or minimum water use allowances to groups with fixed or low incomes

-discounts to large employers or other groups that are thought to provide benefits to the community

-penalty rates, surcharges, and other price mechanisms that assess higher prices to customers who have a higher ability to pay, or to discourage water use practices that are considered harmful to the community

Please specify any social or community objectives that are explicitly included in your water rating *(write short description in the space provided-if none, write "NONE", and skip to #8)*

Objectives (1) _____

Objective (2) _____

Please rank how well your current rate actually meets the community objectives listed above: A rating of 1 means your rate structure does not accomplish them whatsoever and a rating of 10 means your rate structure is completely adequate in accomplishing these goals. *(please circle one ranking for each objective)*

Objective (1)

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Does not accomplish objectives Objectives fully accomplished

Objective (2)

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Does not accomplish objectives Objectives fully accomplished

If some water system customers pay less per unit of water service than it costs to produce, or if some customers pay more than the production cost, the customers who pay more are subsidizing the customers who are paying less. These cross-subsidies can occur both within and between customer classes

Please check any cross subsidies that you believe exist in your current water rating

- ☐ Residential customers subsidize non residential customers
- ☐ Non Residential customers subsidize residential customers
- ☐ High water users subsidies low water users
- ☐ Low water users subsidies high water users
- ☐ Outside city customers subsidize customers inside city

List any other specific types of cross subsidies that may occur in your community

- ☐ _____
- ☐ _____

The main purpose of charging customers for water is to raise the revenues needed to operate a water system.

Please rank the adequacy of your current rating to generate enough revenue to recover total annual costs (operations & maintenance; overhead and administrative; capital improvement/debt service): (please circle the appropriate ranking number)

A ranking of 1 means your rating does not generate enough annual revenue

A ranking of 5 represents a situation where your rating is currently generating sufficient revenues, but it is anticipated that this structure will not generate revenues sufficient in the near future.

A ranking of 10 means your rating is generating enough annual revenue to meet Or exceed total annual costs

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Insufficient Revenues soon to be insufficient Sufficient Revenues

Please rank the ability of your current rating to generate a stable pattern of revenue **month-to-month** *(please circle the appropriate ranking number)*

-A ranking of 1 means your system frequently experiences problems with revenue surpluses or deficits over the course of the year

-A ranking of 5 means that problems due to revenue surpluses or deficit occasionally occur but are not predictable.

-A ranking of 10 means your rating provides a very stable revenue such that revenue surpluses or deficits are seldom if ever encountered

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Unstable Revenues Occasionally unstable Revenues Stable Revenues

Some rate structure are easier than others when it comes to the effort and resources that are involved in setting them up for accounting purposes, administering them to your customers in the form of a water bill, and in keeping records on customer water sales.

From an accounting perspective, please rank how easy your rate structure was to set up when it was first introduced. *(Please circle the appropriate ranking number)*

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Very hard to set up very easy to set up

Please rate how easy your rating is to maintain administratively, in terms of correctly determining customer chargers and keeping water records

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Very hard to set up very easy to set up

Economists describe prices as the signal to customers of cost. In water systems, price is often considered to be the most important signal to consumers to use water wisely. Water rates can be designed to charge users who are thought to be wasting the resource a higher price for water.

Please rank the strength of the signal sent to your customers to conserve water.

(Please circle the appropriate ranking number)

-A ranking of 1 means your system does not send a signal to conserve water to any customer class

-A mid range rating suggests that your sends a moderate signal to conserve to all, or some, customer classes.

-A ranking of 10 means your rating send a strong signal to conserve to all customers classes

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

No conservation signal Moderate signal Strong signal

Water rates apply to a broad customer constituency. Thus, rate setting often becomes a process of political compromise in which the ability of getting a rate passed by a city council or similar elected governing board is the key factors in a rate design. On a scale of 1 to 10, indicate the degree the of political influence that was experienced in designing your current rate *(please circle the appropriate ranking number)*

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

No political consideration Moderate Sole objective of political acceptability

THANK YOU FOR COMPLETING THIS SURVEY

Appendix 2: DATA COLLECTION SURVEY IN BAFOU

GUIDED INTERVIEW USED IN BAFOU WITHIN THE WITHIN THE FRAMEWORK OF THE CORUS PROJECT OF WHICH I WAS ONE OF THE TEAM OF RESEARCH

N° ouvrage	Type (puit, forage, adduction)	Profondeur	Date creusement	Position par rapport au relief (pied de versant, mi versant, sommet colline	Initiateur / proprietaire (individu, asso, Comité, ONG,mixte)	Profession Age Résidence	Type d'utilisation	Environnement (source pollution, distance Wc, porcherie	Nombre de ménage attachés au point d'eau, n'bre de personne	Distance du ménage la plus éloigné du point d'eau	Relations reliant les utilisateurs (proprietaire ET utilisateur	Période d'approvisionnement (toute saision, saison de pluie)	Niveau de protection/ sécurité de l'ouvrage
1													
2													
3													
4													
5													
6													
7													
8													
9													
10													
11													
12													
13													
14													
15													
16													
17													

Appendix 3: Some estimates of extension works in Bali financed by the government

Works descriptions

The ministry design Engineers of the 350m^3 reservoir will produce its specifications, however the general principles of reinforced concrete will be respected.

It must be noted that specifications do not replace the supervising Engineer who has the authority to:

- → Approve all materials supplied to the site
- → See to it that materials meet their standards
- → Modify structural parts according to site conditions
- → Reject pieces of jobs poorly executed.
- → Take responsibilities for all failures due to technical problems

Estimates for New 350 m^3 reservoir

LOT 1: Renforcement du réseau et Construction du réservoir

N°	Désignation	U	Qté	Prix unitaire (FCFAHT)	Prix total (FCFA HT)
1	**Mobilisation**				
1.1	Installation de chantier et du personnel	FF	1	2 500 000	2 500 000
	Sous Total 1				**2 500 000**
2	**Travaux Préparatoires**				
2.1	Désherbage, nivellement et implantation	FF	1	700 000	700 000
2.2	Sous Total 2				700 000
2.3	Captage				
2.4	Captage de sources	U	3	1 200 000	3 600 000
2.5	Protection captage	U	3	600 000	1 800 000
2.6	Fourniture et pose PVC PN 10 DN 50	ml	700	6 500	4 550 000
2.7	*Sous Total 3*				**9 950 000**
3	**Ouvrages annexes**				
3.1	Construction d'un réservoir en BA de 350m^3 avec chambre de manœuvre en agglos 20x20x40 de dimension L=2m ; l=2m ; H=3,2m, recouverte d'une dalle en B.A y compris toutes sujétions	U	01	68 500 000	68 500 000
	Sous Total 4				**68 500 000**
4	**Robinetterie et Accessoires**				
4.1	Fourniture et pose accessoires de pose et de fontainerie	FF	FF	1 500 000	1 500 000
4.2	Fourniture et pose d'une échelle en inox de 4m	ml	4	35 000	140 000
	Sous Total 5				**1 640 000**
5	**Formation et suivi**				
5.1	Formation agents de maintenance	FF		350 000	350 000
5.2	Suivi administration (contrôle et réception des travaux)	FF		2 500 000	2 500 000
	Sous Total 6				**2 850 000**
	Total HT				86 140 000
	TVA				15 332 920
	TTC				101 472 920
	IR				947 340
	TOTAL				95 192 460
	Less catchment works				3 690 000
	NET A MANDATER				81 592 460

13

Appendix 4: Customer agreement document during subscription

KWA

KUMBO WATER AUTHORITY
P.O. BOX 51 – NTO' NSO'
TEL: 33 48 16 00
BUI DIVISION

KWA

KWA – Customer Agreement

By signing this agreement, you are entering into a Water Subscription Contract with the Kumbo Water Authority. The following conditions need to be agreed to prior to new service being started.

KWA will be responsible for:

1. Completing the new connection and commencing service within five (5) working days of the signing of this contract.
2. Reading meters on a regular schedule and providing the customer with a monthly bill. The bill will show the amount of water used, the current bill amount and any outstanding charges owed by the customer.
3. Cleaning and maintaining meters as required.
4. Replacing meters that do not function properly because of age or mechanical breakage.
5. Fixing leaks that occur between the water main on the street and the stop cock.
6. Ensuring that all KWA employees are carrying proper identification that clearly states their name and position within KWA.
7. Responding to customer concerns as quickly as possible.

The customer will be responsible for:

1. Paying the monthly bill on or before the stated due date.
2. Applying to have the meter reconnected and paying a reconnect fee following a disconnection for unpaid bills.
3. Protecting the meter from any form of vandalism, intentional breakage, or other misuse.
4. Paying the cost for repair or replacement of damaged meters and the stop cock due to tampering or misuse.
5. Keeping access to the meters clear and open to KWA employees at all times.
6. Keeping all animals, including dogs, away from meters and KWA installations.
7. Reporting leaks, bad meters, or any other problem with water system to KWA, Customer Service Unit as soon as possible.
8. Not allowing any stealing of water from their connection. Failure to do so will result in legal action being taken by KWA.
9. Paying money to the cashier only. No other KWA employee is authorized to accept any money for any work done or for bribes or to pay bills for the customer.

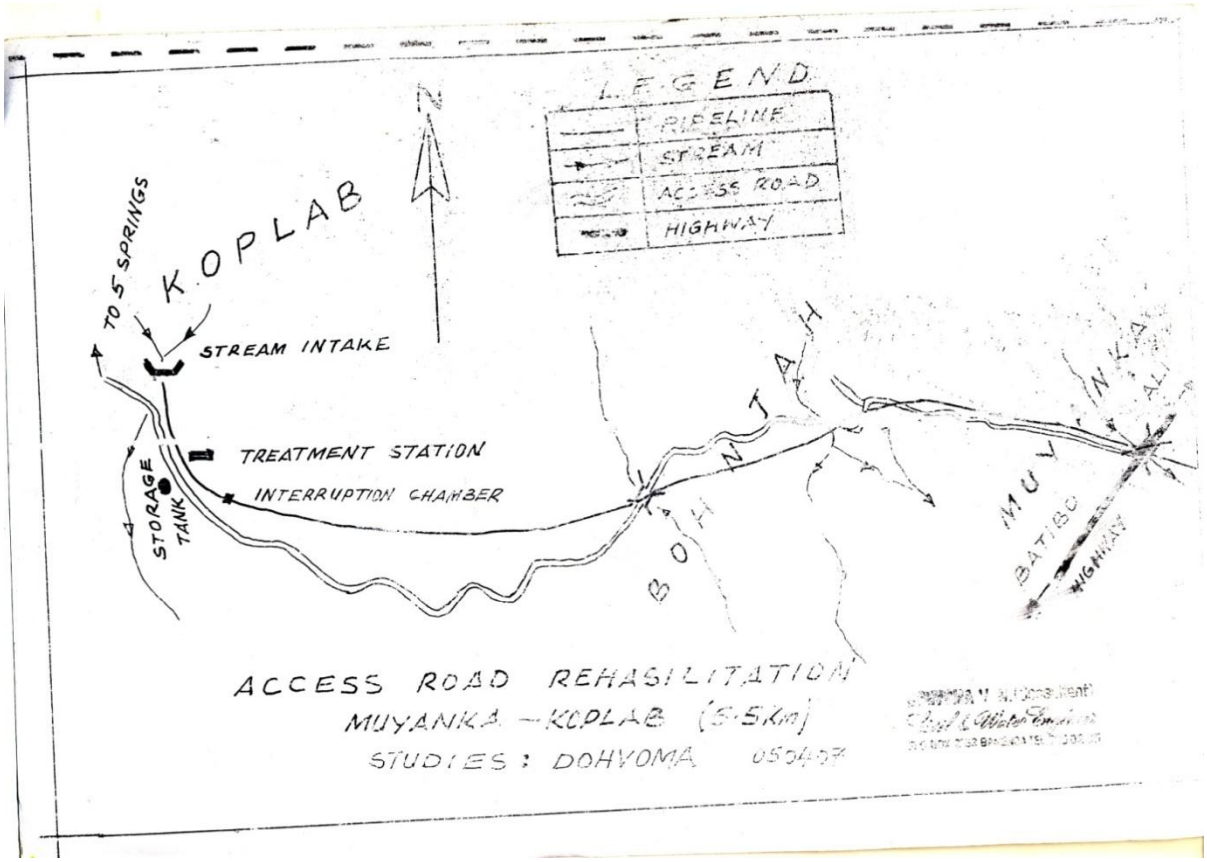
I have read and agree to the conditions of the agreement as stated.

Customer _____

Chief, Customer Service _____

Dated:

Appendix 5: The road construction to the Koplap catchment site (financed by the government)



Appendix 6: Other examples of inter-tribal wars between communities

With sharp machetes, hectares of crops like plantains and coffee along the Bali-Bawock highway were brought down with arrogant impunity.

Bawock Fon's wife, Henriette Nkwamo, told The Post that on the evening of Saturday, March 3, at about 5 pm, they were informed that some nine men of the Bali "Ngumba"(chief's councilors and other notables) that was heading to Mantum quarter decided to divert and enter the Bawock Palace without authorisation.

Since the Bawock Fon, Theodore Wanda, was not in the Palace, one retired policeman Peter Limen, whose residence is at the entrance of the Palace, decided to block the Ngumba.

But the Bali invaders pounced on him and alerted the other Ngumba people who were already arriving at Mantum to come back claiming that their Ngumba bag had been seized. In the scuffle that ensued, a

pastor of the Presbyterian Church Bawock, Rev. Ignatius Ngongeh, whose church and residence is also close to the Bawock Palace, rushed to the scene to preach peace and rescue his neighbour Limen.

"…But as soon as I got there, I only succeeded in taking Limen who is my Parish Chairman. When they discovered that Pa Limen had escaped through the ceiling of my house, the mob fell on me and got me well beaten.

Thanks to some Christians who came to my rescue," Rev. Ngongeh narrated. He said the Bali warriors proceeded to the Palace, chanting war songs known as "Voma". Extensive destruction started with the bamboo fence into the Palace and in the inner chambers the invaders looted and set ablaze the sitting room with TVs, chairs and other arts that included the Fon's throne.

The damage in the Palace was extended to where the Fon's wives and children live. The latter were chased away before the warriors set the houses ablaze. Recounting her sorrows, another wife of Fon Wanda, Mirable Nkwano said: "We are refugees because all my dresses and those of the children were burnt. That same night they wanted to kill us and we escaped and slept at the church hall."

At about midnight, on Saturday, the youths of Mantum who are of Bali origin, began destroying houses on boundary with Bawock. The affected people fled into coffee farms and nearby bushes for safety. The quarters most affected by massive destruction of property include Nitap where 12 houses were razed, Fomnjoh quarter and Douala quarter.

Limen, who was severely beaten and his car smashed is responding to treatment at the Bamenda Provincial Hospital. A provision store estimated at FCFA 10 million belonging to one Christopher Nono was burnt to ashes. Some FCFA 350,000 and two motorcycles were reportedly burnt in the store. Another trader, Francis Biandas, was dragged out of his car and beaten, before his car was set ablaze. Jacob Yimi lost 150 bags of Robusta coffee in the flames. The headmaster of Government School Bawock, Philip Ngaso, was helpless as flames engulfed a two-apartment building. Others who suffered immeasurable damage of their property include, Ms. Cecilia Jam, Mrs. Genevieve Tanyi and Joseph Nyewa. The Mezam SDO, Marcelin Jules Ndjaga, and the DO for Bali, Daniel Ngembane Ekolle, who went around Bawock, expressed indignation and described the act as barbaric and inhuman.

The administrators promised to track down all the criminals involved in the destruction. At about 3 pm on Sunday, March 4, five Bali youths suspected to have been part of the 500-man crowd were arrested at Bawock in the presence of the SDO and were whisked off to Bamenda by gendarmes. It would be recalled that last December 6, violence erupted in Bali Nyongha, following attempts by the Mezam administration to demarcate the boundary between Bawock in Bali Subdivision and Mbuh village and Pinyin in Santa Subdivision.

When the delegation from Bamenda Provincial Service of Lands led by the Mezam administration arrived at the disputed area in Bawock, they were surprised that tension was brewing among the Balis who were not invited to the locus. Before the team from Bamenda could set to work, the irate Bali

population who claim that they have a shrine in the disputed area, descended on the administrators and gendarmes with clubs, stones and sticks.

The pillars and billboards meant to demarcate the land including two vehicles were all smashed. Contacted by phone, the Fon of Bali, Fon Ganyongha III, said he hadn't been to the scene yet but that his people were provoked…

Appendix 7: Fight for position by North West fons and conflicting interests with their communities

NOWEFA was created to call the *fons'* attention to the fact that they were being used by the ruling regime on the detriment of their people. At that moment since there was still hope for power to change (to the opposition) there will come a time were they (the *fons*) will neither be with the new regime (the opposition, SDF) nor with their people. With the creation of NOWEFA, Fon Fusi Yakum Ntaw was elected president. To Achiri Achu, a strong fon's association was not of interest to him, as a result, he created a rival association, the North West *Fons'* Conference (NOWEFCO). It was launched in the Bamenda Skyline Hotel. This was the first time in history that fons meeting took place in an hotel instead of a palace. The launching of NOWEFCO was in sharp contrast with the low level launching of NOWEFA. With the *fon* of Bali Kumbat (*Fon* Doh Gah Gwanyin) as its president NOWEFCO was provided on permanent bases "ammunition" to fight NOWEFA.

Under Achidi Achu's reign as prime minister, *Fon* Doh Gah of Bali Kumbat became a political hero greatly envied by his fellow comrades. With the creation of NOWEFCO, one could make out that the motto was "down with the so-called big five fondoms". Rumours went that the state made promises to reclassify, an affair that tempted the second class and third class chiefs to be captured/manipulated. Meanwhile chiefs like *Fon* Doh Gah of Bali Kumbat some sort of mocked at the first class chiefs because he had a more comfortable political position even though his is not a first class chief. After tasting power, *Fon* Doh Gah did everything possible to stay in the corridors of power. In January 1996, he rigged legislative elections in Bali Kumbat. Meanwhile Achidi Achu never succeeded to be elected in his Santa constituency; nevertheless NOWEFCO prevented him from falling to ground level. This humiliating situation was not only suffered by Achidi Achu but by most of the first class chiefs who went in for elections in their regions. In September 1996 Achiri Achu was sacked and Peter Mafany Musonge was appointed. In May 1997, the CPDM that won all the 20 parliamentary seats thanks to the SDF boycott lost 19 of seats. *Fon* Doh won the lone seat for the ruling CPDM Party. He was then a political god.

It should be noted that *Fon* Doh was protected by Achidi Achu who was not still prime minister, he needed thus to consolidate his position and look for ways to sustain the association financially. It seems the regime appreciated his efforts by the fact that he was awarded many contracts or to the "royal enterprise" headed by the fon or better still belonging to the fon. The Fon was unaware of the fact that Achidi Achu his mentor of yesterday was uncomfortable with him. Fon Doh's rise and dominating position in the Northwest only deepened the hatred other fons who had been unsuccessful in the political mafia. He was considered as an outsider. Fon Doh and his NOWEFCO caused serious damage to NOWEFA and it never succeeded to consolidate the fons as intended.

Appendix 8: Narrative on some community organization in the Western Highlands

In olden times the annual dance occasion used to be fora where chiefs could chose their wives from the crowd that gathers to watch and participate. Since polygamy is still considered as one of the two official marital regimes that operate in Cameroon, palaces in Cameroon is where you can see extraordinary social organization patterns where one man (the chief) can marry as many as 50 wives as was the case with the former chief of Bafut (Fon Achirimbi I), and with as many as 150 children. At first, women were privileged getting married to the chief because of the respect they are given in the community. Everything within the village belongs to the "palace". The *fon* has the right to have any woman he desires. He/she who stands against that is banished from the village. Due to the fact that these wives were not well catered for, from the 1980s this phenomenon is changing. Many women were not at ease getting married to *fons*. Getting married just needed putting on the cowry bracelet around the wrist of the new wife, which in most cases was done by the chiefs' messengers. In most cases as mentioned above most of the young girls who were forcefully married to chiefs either did that or go on exile, if they chose staying on exile, then their families were to undergo much exclusion which in most cases included exclusion from common water supplies and participation in the village's development. This does not only hold in the past, its true till date, today those girls can flee from their villages, it will entail the same punishment to their relatives who stay back. Still in Cameroon natives are very much attached to their villages and feel more secured attached to their village than as a Cameroonian citizen. In this light, I will give a narrative that explains how the community can punish an individual who goes against the rules of the community. This narration is not to divert our attention on the focus of this study but rather to emphasize on the complexity of villages in Cameroon.

In 1997-1999 I witnessed in Nkwen that one woman was judged and condemned because the community realized she had helped abort the baby of her pregnant daughter which she had been refusing to her friends she wasn't pregnant. The community had realized that the daughter was pregnant but each time they made mention of it the girl's mother will refuse vehemently. She certainly had in mind then to disprove the community that her daughter's pregnancy. At full pregnancy, the girl started labour and was not taken to the hospital by her mom who instead kept her home and decided to help her in delivery. She successfully delivered her daughter of the baby, killed and carried the baby's corpse to a far off farm where she buried the remains.

The community which was very aware of the girl's pregnancy had been questioning her mother's reaction (refusing her daughter's pregnancy). Shortly after the girl was delivered, the population had been waiting to see either the girl with the baby, hear or see signals of a new born. When asked what had happened this time around a very angry crowd that was out to know about the where about of the new born, the girl said they ask her mom. Her mom accepted under pressure that she helped abort the baby and led the population to the grave. This narrative is to highlight the power of the community. How community judgement can surpass the state at times. The woman was banned from all public occasions (like funerals, death celebrations), banned from all public places (like the tap stand from where she used to carry water), moreover, nobody was to talk to her. In most communities in the Western Highlands a member will prefer doing a prison sentence than undergo such condemnation. This woman felt so lonely she left her house in the village after spending weeks without uttering nor answering a word from her neighbours. She finally left to meet her husband with whom she had been separated for several years.

Changements institutionnels, stratégies d'approvisionnement et gouvernance de l'eau sur les Hautes Terres de l'Ouest Cameroun. Exemple des petites villes de Kumbo, Bafou et Bali.

NGEFOR GILLIAN SANGUV

Sommaire

1. Introduction

Cette synthèse se rapporte aux changements structurels et aux interactions qui ont suivi l'introduction du mode de gouvernance de l'eau centré sur la libéralisation et la décentralisation. Elle tente de fournir une vue d'ensemble du processus de la gouvernance de l'eau au Cameroun à travers des enquêtes détaillées dans trois petites villes des Hautes Terres du Cameroun. Les institutions et les systèmes actuels sont étudiés en tenant compte de leur évolution au fil des années, y compris les modèles de gestion dont ils ont hérités tout en en relevant les permanences. On verra ainsi que d'une part, la fragmentation institutionnelle et juridictionnelle nuisent à la gestion communautaire de l'eau et d'autre part, que la diversité de l'organisation communautaire entrave la gouvernance de l'eau.

1.1. Portée et intérêt de la thèse

Cette étude sur la gouvernance de l'eau dans des programmes communautaires est située à la convergence des études sur gouvernance et celle sur la gestion de l'eau dans une perspective socio- juridique. Elle se concentre sur la relation entre les institutions (formelles et informelles) et les modèles de gouvernance qu'ils produisent pour montrer que les entraves à la gouvernance de l'eau sont variées. La fragmentation des compétences est associée à des modèles de gouvernance qui peuvent être basées sur l'entraide mais qui peuvent être aussi conflictuels. D'ailleurs, ces modèles varient souvent au fil du temps. Cette constatation est importante pour plusieurs raisons. Tout d'abord, elle implique que la fragmentation juridictionnelle n'est pas toujours négative, bien au contraire elle peut être fonctionnelle dans certains contextes. Ensuite, cela implique que cette fragmentation est une réalité qui est difficile à changer (au moins au Cameroun), mais étant donné que toute une gamme de modèles de gouvernance peut être produite, les décideurs peuvent choisir des modes d'intégration plus efficaces. Enfin, les partenaires (ONG, communauté) peuvent ne pas avoir confiance dans l'Etat et être très hostiles à tout processus qui peut perturber leurs arrangements locaux.

Quelle est la pertinence d'une étude socio-politique de la fragmentation institutionnelle de la gestion de l'eau (avec en particulier la gestion communautaire de l'eau) de façon plus générale ? Les Hautes Terres de l'Ouest Cameroun avec leurs importantes ressources en eau ont une gestion de l'eau peu efficace avec de nombreux problèmes de gouvernance. Certains d'entre

eux prennent leur source dans les structures de gouvernance du Cameroun, qui posent des défis particuliers pour la gestion des systèmes d'eau communautaires. Dans un contexte plus large, la fragmentation de la gouvernance de l'eau est de plus en plus citée comme un défi majeur en vue de l'amélioration des résultats de la gestion de l'eau au Cameroun et dans de nombreux autres pays d'Afrique subsaharienne. Toutefois, la fragmentation juridictionnelle et institutionnelle est rarement définie avec précision, et ses bases légales sont rarement examinées: c'est cette lacune que tente de combler cette thèse.

Dans cette optique, elle se propose d'analyser les dimensions, les sources et les conséquences de la fragmentation institutionnelle de la gouvernance de l'eau, de la complexité des communautés en matière de gestion de l'eau. Les Hautes Terres de l'Ouest Cameroun abordées à travers trois petites villes (Kumbo, Bali et Bafou) constituent un terrain d'étude intéressant parce qu'on y trouve une société très hiérarchisée avec de nombreuses petites chefferies autonomes et souvent rivales. D'un autre côté, cette région est peuplée à la fois par des populations francophones à l'Ouest et anglophones au nord-Ouest.

Le concept de gouvernance est approché suivant plusieurs dimensions car il a évolué à travers les années. Au début, il était utilisé dans la coordination des fonctions financières et économiques mais plutard il est devenu polysémique surtout dans les questions relatives au développement. En 1995, la Division de la gouvernance et de la gestion du PNUD a présenté la gouvernance comme une base incontournable pour le développement humain durable.

Le Cameroun est situé en Afrique centrale, et sa population, selon le recensement national de 2010 était de 19 600 000 millions d'habitants. Il est l'un des pays d'Afrique centrale qui depuis les années 1990 tentent d'appliquer une stratégie de réduction de la pauvreté et qui tente d'améliorer les modes de gouvernance. Ainsi dans le domaine de la gestion de l'eau, le Cameroun met l'accent sur le passage à la décentralisation avec une participation active des différents acteurs.

Figure 1: Map of Cameroon with the delimitation of the Western Highlands

Source : Atlas national de développement physique du Cameroun

Cette synthèse considère que l'absence d'interaction entre les acteurs, les institutions fragmentées et le manque de coordination comme la source de l'échec de la gouvernance de l'eau. Elle explore également les possibilités que peuvent apporter de nouvelles formes d'organisations. Avec le concept de gouvernance, le rôle de l'Etat est interrogé à partir d'un État interventionniste qui évolue et se limite au rôle de régulateur. Cela suppose que l'échec de coordination peut toujours être corrigé par la modification des structures réglementaires. L'objectif est de montrer qu'au Cameroun, il est indispensable d'intégrer dans la gouvernance de l'eau les structures informelles déjà en place. La question au cœur de la synthèse est de savoir dans quelle mesure les différents objectifs tenant compte de tous les acteurs à travers l'équité sociale, l'efficacité économique et la protection de l'environnement peuvent être

combinés au sein d'un cadre de mise en œuvre cohérent et intégré compte tenu de la diversité des communautés.

En plus de notre question principale, nous avons ajouté celle de la diversité dans les modes d'accès à l'eau dans les régions francophones et anglophones du Cameroun. Certaines collectivités ont créé des institutions de gestion et des règlements pour leurs systèmes d'approvisionnement en eau, (comme dans les régions anglophones du Cameroun avec l'approvisionnement communautaires), tandis que d'autres ont encore du mal avec le concept de gestion participative, comme dans la communauté francophone qui sera discutée ultérieurement dans cette étude. Ces différences sont dues à de nombreux facteurs, dont bon nombre d'entre eux sont enracinés dans les structures socio-économiques et historiques des communautés.

Toutes les questions de la problématique peuvent être synthétisées de la façon suivante :
Comment rendre compte des rapports de pouvoir dans des sociétés fragmentées où la diversité des acteurs (Etat, ONG, communautés etc…) et la pluralité des référentiels (anglophones, francophones, qui rendent compte différemment de la place de l'Etat dans les politiques de l'eau) sont complexes à décrypter?
Comment mettre en évidence la complexité de ces communautés à travers le rôle de leadership de certains acteurs qui se caractérisent par un manque de transparence et de redevabilité auprès des populations locales?
Comment expliquer le fait que dans des régions présentant les mêmes caractéristiques physiques et culturelles (localisées dans les Hautes Terres de l'Ouest), il existe des stratégies et des modes de gestion différents en matière d'accès à l'eau ? Dans quelle mesure les facteurs historiques sont-ils déterminants pour expliquer cette diversité?

En réponse à toutes ces questions nous avons formulé les hypothèses suivantes : Une gouvernance hybride (et non une politique nationale homogène) fondée sur une participation démocratique de l'ensemble des acteurs permet d'assurer un accès équitable à l'eau dans les Hautes Terres de l'Ouest Cameroun.
Le paiement du service de l'eau et la capacité d'impliquer la population à fixer le prix sont un élément incontournable de cette gouvernance pour assurer la viabilité du service.
Des raisons historiques expliquent les différences en matière de gestion communautaire dans les régions étudiées, selon les régions anglophones et francophones

Nous avons adopté une étude comparative afin d'évaluer notre hypothèse en ajoutant Bafou au Cameroun francophone. Le choix de Bafou se justifie pour deux autres raisons. Tout d'abord, les régions occidentales qui font partie des Hautes Terres de l'Ouest Cameroun partagent beaucoup de points communs. Contrairement au Sud-Ouest du Cameroun (anglophone), l'organisation sociale de l'Ouest et du Nord-Ouest est hiérarchisée avec de très forts liens culturels. Il permettra également de créer un lien entre les différentes stratégies de l'eau (principalement les puits à Bafou) et l'organisation socio-économique de la société. Deuxièmement, ces deux unités administratives (Ouest et Nord-Ouest) relèvent des Hautes Terres de l'Ouest avec les mêmes conditions naturelles (relief et pluviométrie). Notre question a été de savoir pourquoi les stratégies d'accès à l'eau sont très différentes alors que les aspects culturels sont identiques.

1.2. Cadre d'analyse : Le Cameroun et la modernisation du secteur de l'eau

Comme mentionné dans la partie introductive de ce travail, nous avons choisi trois petites villes ; Kumbo, Bali et Bafou. Les données utilisées dans le cas de Bafou ont été recueillies avec une équipe de recherche dans le cadre du projet CORUS en 2007. L'équipe de recherche était composée de douze étudiants de master et de doctorat à l'Université de Dschang. Les douze étudiants ont été divisés en groupes de trois personnes sur un espace bien délimité avec un GPS pour identifier tous les points d'eau qui servent la communauté. L'information a été obtenue grâce à une entrevue guidée et deux autres études de terrain effectuées lors de nos deux visites au Cameroun de novembre 2009 à mars 2010 puis de juillet à octobre 2011. A la fin de chaque journée, l'information recueillie a été présentée par tous les groupes et harmonisée avec des codes communs. Plus tard, un rapport a été rédigé sur les stratégies en matière d'accès à l'eau adoptées par la communauté de Bafou.

L'objectif de la thèse est d'analyser le mode de gouvernance dans le secteur de l'eau potable au Cameroun et de discuter les défis et les tendances présentées par l'approvisionnement communauté en eau dans le futur. L'analyse est effectuée à travers l'étude de l'évolution de la gouvernance de l'eau en décomposant ses éléments et notamment les conséquences de l'héritage des anciennes organisations locales sur le système.

A travers un survol historique, nous avons montré qu'il y avait un large éventail de politiques coloniales et que cet héritage est présent partout au Cameroun. L'eau a toujours été une

ressource respectée au Cameroun pré- colonial, la société lui attribuant des significations culturelles, spirituelles et symboliques, en plus de sa signification économique introduite dans les années 1930.

Cette section introductive a sondé la dimension humaine dans l'histoire de la gouvernance de l'eau pour montrer que des formes de gouvernance (protection des sources et drainage de l'eau) existaient avant l'ère coloniale, à travers des initiatives communautaires qui existent encore dans certaines localités jusqu'à ce jour. La gouvernance de l'eau sous une forme plus centralisée est apparue avec l'ère coloniale, avec l'introduction des lois sur l'eau et le changement graduel du statut des eaux. C'était le début du développement d'un domaine public basé surtout sur l'ingénierie des grands ouvrages hydrauliques. Dans les années 1960, il y avait nécessité de revoir les approches des deux stratégies de développement appliquées par les Français et les Britanniques. De nouveaux acteurs sont entrés en scène pour élaborer des politiques de l'eau. Dans cette optique, nous avons disséqué la notion de gouvernance et cela pour trois grandes raisons.

Tout d'abord la région des Hautes Terres de l'Ouest du Cameroun, devant l'incapacité de l'Etat à satisfaire les besoins en eau, a développé des initiatives locales diverses, basée surtout sur le modèle communautaire. Apparemment, les méthodes adoptées dans la région de l'Ouest (section francophone) sont très différentes de celles du Sud-Ouest et Nord-Ouest. Cette situation constitue une des raisons du choix de cette zone d'étude.

C'est ainsi que l'une des principales hypothèses qui ont guidé cette étude est que les stratégies et politiques de développement coloniales ont laissé des empreintes dans les deux régions. Dans cette optique, un flashback sur l'histoire de la gouvernance de l'eau nous permettra de comprendre l'évolution des droits de l'eau et des comportements sociétaux ainsi que des institutions.

Comme nous supposons que les acteurs et les institutions du passé ont eu beaucoup d'influences sur les pratiques de gestion, il ya nécessité d'un retour sur le passé. Même si les acteurs présents au Cameroun sont pratiquement les mêmes depuis les années 70, il n'en existe pas moins des différences dans l'évolution des modes d'approvisionnement en eau dans les deux régions. Pour cette raison, l'évolution de l'adduction d'eau potable sera traitée séparément du développement communautaire.

C’est dans ce cadre que nous avons posé l'une des principales questions de recherche et les hypothèses de la thèse pour expliquer l'évolution du secteur de l'eau potable au Cameroun avec une attention particulière aux racines du développement communautaire de l'eau. Deux objectifs principaux ont guidé ce choix : d'une part nous avons cherché à comprendre les règles coutumières de la gouvernance de l'eau dans l'ère pré-coloniale et comment les acteurs présents dans le secteur de l'eau potable au Cameroun les ont intégrées. On s’est alors posé des questions sur ce qui existait et ce qui est nouveau dans la théorie et la pratique du développement communautaire au Cameroun. Ensuite nous avons cherché à examiner comment ces évolutions se tiennent dans une perspective historique et comparative entre les différentes parties (anglophone et francophone) du pays. Nous avons ainsi montré que la gestion de l'eau dans le Cameroun précolonial avait déjà des significations multidimensionnelles. En outre, nous voulions retracer les origines du développement communautaire au Cameroun. Dans ce contexte, nous pensons que le gouvernement britannique a grandement influencé la partie anglophone du Cameroun en poussant les communautés à contribuer à la gestion et au maintien de l'approvisionnement en eau. Pendant ce temps, la gouvernance de l'eau du Cameroun français était centralisée, avec très peu ou pas de rôle pour les collectivités locales.

Dans les deux parties du Cameroun l’eau a été considérée comme une ressource stratégique pour les nouvelles formes de pouvoir. Ainsi, de plus en plus, le contrôle de l'Etat sur l'eau a conduit à un nouveau forme de contrôle sur les «communautés» locales. Tout comme l'histoire du développement de l'eau nous permet de comprendre le développement communautaire au Cameroun, il nous permet aussi de comprendre la situation actuelle de l'eau.

1.3. Eau et réformes institutionnelles au Cameroun

La crise économique dans les années 1990 a conduit le Cameroun à une réforme de ses institutions avec les plans d'ajustement structurel (PAS). Cette réforme a entrepris la démarche de décentralisation. La modernisation de l'État distingue deux niveaux d’action en faveur du développement : (1) l'intégration de nouveaux acteurs : intégrer les corps intermédiaires avec l'Etat comme régulateur du processus. Ainsi, il définit les politiques, créée des organes normatifs, promeut les conditions favorables au marché, facilite l'investissement privé, et permet la stabilité économique et la croissance, (2) le changement technologique pour permettre des améliorations dans la simplification de la gestion et de la souplesse

administrative. Le but est de créer une culture fonctionnelle dans les organisations qui mettent en place des services publics adéquats. La stratégie de décentralisation qui a suivi la réforme institutionnelle et mode de gouvernance a permis des changements dans les deux niveaux d'action.

De nombreux secteurs ont été jugés prioritaires et touchés par la réforme, y compris celui de l'eau potable et de son l'assainissement. La loi municipale a adopté la délégation des responsabilités concernant l'approvisionnement en eau et l'assainissement vers les municipalités, de même que la gestion de la ressource eau, une tâche qui avait été dans les mains de l'Etat depuis plus de cinquante ans.

La mise en œuvre de la loi fut retardée jusque dans les années 2000 lorsque la Stratégie de Réduction de la Pauvreté (DSRP) a été approuvée sous la supervision du Fonds Monétaire International et de la Banque mondiale en 2001. À la fin de 2003, le processus d'actualisation du DSRP a été conclu (RH, 2005a) et il coïncidait avec le lancement de la décentralisation dans le secteur de l'eau qui a débuté en 2002, avec l'aide des agences de coopération et de la Banque mondiale et le Programme Eau et Assainissement.

Le défi pour le Ministère de l'Eau et de l'énergie au Cameroun est de dynamiser les institutions d'eau, en relation avec leur environnement, comme le cadre physique et le contexte local, les milieux sociaux, économiques et politiques (Saleth et Dinar, 2004). Au Cameroun, la politique nationale de l'eau est l'une des phases de la transition dans laquelle la gestion de l'eau doit être transférée aux municipalités.

Cependant, il est vite apparu que la décentralisation sans cadre législatif adéquat est difficile à réaliser. Nous avons ainsi montré que le manque de coordination institutionnelle et organisationnelle a lourdement handicapé les débats et le processus de consultation depuis la période post- indépendance. À l'heure actuelle, la plupart des lois relatives à l'eau au Cameroun sont en cours d'élaboration ou en phase d'amendements : le non achèvement du processus d'élaboration des lois relatives à l'eau (développé dans chapitre 2 de la thèse) est un obstacle pour le développement du secteur de l'eau potable dans son ensemble. La participation des communautés et des acteurs de la société civile (chapitre 3 et 4) fait partie des éléments rénovés que cette synthèse met en exergue. En général, le débat sur les réformes institutionnelles réussies ou non soulève, non pas seulement des contraintes endogènes et les

insuffisances du système du Cameroun, mais aussi l'incapacité à surmonter les interventions extérieures. Les réflexions suivantes exposent la méthodologie de recherche, suivie par la base théorique mobilisée, puis scrutent les tendances mondiales et se terminent par l'étude de cas au Cameroun à travers une confrontation entre terrains et théories.

1.4. La structure de Recherche

Cette thèse comprend trois parties principales : (i) la première partie traite de l'évolution institutionnelle du secteur de l'eau potable (ii) la seconde des deux principaux concepts directeurs ce travail et la partie (iii) présente l'analyse du terrain. Cette synthèse comprend ainsi l'analyse de l'interaction entre les composantes de la gouvernance de l'eau au Cameroun en utilisant les cas de Kumbo, Bali et Bafou. La phase conceptuelle subdivise les différentes notions en leurs éléments constitutifs et détermine la façon dont les composantes sont liées entre elles et au sein de la nouvelle organisation globale pour finalement conclure par une évaluation des concordances ou non entre théorie et terrain.

2. Quels outils conceptuels mobiliser pour aborder des sociétés aussi complexes ?

Dans la première partie de cette thèse, nous analysons le concept de gouvernance dans ses éléments constitutifs pour évaluer son utilisation pour notre recherche. Nous voulons d'abord aborder la question des échelles, ensuite l'interaction entre les acteurs et enfin le domaine de l'action collective à l'aide du concept de participation. Nous aborderons ensuite celui de la communauté pour mettre en évidence la complexité des sociétés objet de notre étude.

2.1. Le concept de gouvernance, entre fragmentation et polysémie

Au cours des dernières décennies, un intérêt croissant autour du concept de la gouvernance en a fait l'un des plus influents en économie, sociologie, sciences politiques et les études sur le développement. Cette large utilisation de la gouvernance a conduit à un grand nombre de publications et une variété d'approches et d'études théoriques ont été développées.

Notre objectif dans ce travail est de mettre en évidence les changements institutionnels dans le domaine de l'eau mais aussi la multiplicité des acteurs au Cameroun et donc de la nécessité d'une coordination. L'accent mis sur la gouvernance de l'eau signifie que nous nous sommes intéressée à l'action collective en ce qui concerne les questions de l'eau, en questionnant la

participation des parties prenantes et des communautés concernées. En outre, cela signifie que nous ne sommes pas seulement intéressés à l'aspect « action» de l'action collective, mais aussi à la complexité du contexte institutionnel dans lequel s'inscrit l'action collective. L'accent mis sur le changement institutionnel signifie que nous sommes intéressés à l'évolution du domaine public et son interaction avec le domaine privé, et les changements aux frontières public / privé-communautaire. Nous allons commencer cette partie de la thèse par une élaboration du concept de gouvernance. Quels sont les éléments qui constituent une structure de gouvernance de l'eau ? Bien que le concept reconnaît que l'Etat est un acteur important, nous avons également examiné les ambitions et le rôle des acteurs non gouvernementaux dans l'action collective en ce qui concerne les problèmes d'eau. Nous avons cherché une élaboration du concept de gouvernance qui tienne compte des aspects multi- niveaux, multi-acteurs et multi-ressource de l'action collective. Nous cherchons également à comprendre le rôle des droits de propriété dans la gouvernance de l'eau, notamment la démarcation entre le domaine public et privé et de la communauté. Nous allons tenter de lier le concept de gouvernance à la notion de régime de ressources, ce qui nous permet de mieux étudier la fragmentation des compétences du secteur de l'eau au Cameroun. Cela facilitera notre compréhension de l'état de l'eau à partir de différents points de vue de les harmoniser pour une meilleure gouvernance. Après avoir identifié les éléments constitutifs d'une structure de gouvernance et une ressource, nous nous sommes soucié de trouver et comprendre les exemples de gouvernance de l'eau dans lesquelles sont impliqués les acteurs non gouvernementaux et de la société civile.

2.1.1. Qu'entendons-nous par gouvernance

Deux notions sont clairement différenciées dans l'approche institutionnaliste: les organisations et les institutions. Selon North (1990), les organisations sont les joueurs dans un jeu, alors que les institutions sont les règles du jeu. Les caractéristiques des organisations sont représentées par North comme un groupe d'individus liés à un projet commun pour atteindre des objectifs, de fournir une structure pour l'interaction humaine. En ce qui concerne l'eau, North (1990) définit les institutions de l'eau comme guide du comportement:

«les institutions de l'eau peuvent être définies comme des situations qui délimitent des ensembles d'action, offrent des incitations et déterminent les résultats à la fois dans les décisions individuelles et collectives liées au développement, à l'affectation, l'utilisation et la gestion de l'eau ».

Il affirme en outre que la forme des institutions est déterminée par les avantages qu'ils peuvent fournir aux acteurs concernés. Dans la même lignée, Mc Cay et al (1987) à la suite Saleth et Dinar (2004:98) s'accordent sur les aspects internes d'une institution de l'eau comme une structure interactive déterminée par la vigueur : (i) des droits sur l'eau, la responsabilisation et, entre autres, les interactions avec les lois relatives à l'eau (structure de gouvernance), (ii) de la structure institutionnelle de l'eau : la loi relative à l'eau, la politique et les éléments organisationnels (cadre de gouvernance), (iii) de l'environnement institutionnel de l'eau : historique, juridique, conjoncture économique, social, politique et physique du pays. Les institutions peuvent être regroupées dans deux types principaux: les institutions formelles et informelles. Le premier est accepté et reconnu par la loi, tandis que le second est constitué par le comportement et les conventions. Dans un autre document, North (1993) décrit les établissements de façon plus précise comme : «*les contraintes conçues par l'homme pour structurer l'interaction. Ils sont constitués de contraintes formelles (par exemple, les règles, les lois, les constitutions), les contraintes informelles (par exemple, les normes du comportement, conventions, codes de conduite auto- imposés), et leurs modes d'application. Ensemble, ils définissent la structure d'incitation des sociétés et en particulier des économies*». Le cadre institutionnel à moyen terme est l'ensemble des institutions dans lesquelles les décisions sont prises et mises en œuvre. Il est composé par: (i) l'environnement institutionnel (contraintes de base guidant le comportement individuel et organisationnel, (ii) les arrangements institutionnels autrement connu comme modèles de gouvernance et (iii) les acteurs de l'organisation (individus, organismes et organisations). Dans le cas où le cadre institutionnel ne fournit pas l'environnement permettant l'amélioration et l'adaptation, il ya un besoin de *changement institutionnel.* L'occurrence ou la nécessité d'un changement institutionnel est déterminée par la nécessité de faire des choix sur les différents aspects de la gouvernance.

Kooiman (2003) différencie les types de changement institutionnel en séparant la théorie (gouvernance) de la pratique (administration) et il définit la gouvernance comme «*l'ensemble des interactions dans lesquelles participent acteurs publics et privés, visant à résoudre des problèmes sociétaux ou la création d'opportunités de la société, s'occupant des institutions comme les cadres de ces interactions, et établissant une base normative pour toutes ces activités»*(Kooiman 2003:4) Aux fins de cette synthèse, la gouvernance telle que définie par Kooiman traduit le mieux ce que nous entendons par ce terme.

La *nouvelle gouvernance* est une alternative sensée amener de nouveaux acteurs, en plus de l'Etat. Basée sur les intiatives communautaires (appelé certain comme collaborative ou participative), ces approches sur la gouvernance de l'eau mettent en place des canaux par lesquels l'information peut servir à prendre des décisions, car les populations possèdent des connaissances détaillées sur la façon dont elles utilisent l'eau, leurs besoins, et les conséquences possibles des changements. La plupart des collectivités possèdent une panoplie de sanctions acceptées de tous et qui sont appliquées à ceux qui s'écartent des normes opérationnelles et les principes régissant l'utilisation de l'eau; certaines de ces sanctions peuvent ne pas exister dans les institutions formelles. Il ya, cependant, certaines limites à l'approche communautaire. L'accès à l'eau et d'autres ressources peut être politiquement contesté, et ainsi la " gestion " n'est pas uniquement un exercice technique neutre dans l'optimisation de la productivité de l'eau, mais aussi une arène pour diverses revendications n'ayant souvent rien à voir avec l'eau. Comme l'a souligné Kohler- Koch et al, (2001), le concept de communauté lui-même est problématique, du fait que la solidarité et la coopération peuvent ne pas aller de soi. Les aspects idéologiques peuvent masquer les tensions et les insuffisances qui caractérisent l'action collective tant dans le passé et que dans le présent.

Le terme de «communauté» ne signifie pas nécessairement homogénéité : des facteurs comme le sexe, l'âge, la classe sociale, l'accès à l'information ou non (asymétrie) et la conscience des droits de l'eau, etc influencent souvent la manière dont l'eau est accessible et est utilisée au niveau de la communauté. S'il ya des biais par rapport à la façon dont les décisions sont prises au sein des communautés, les approches axées sur la communauté peuvent parfois augmenter les inégalités qu'elles cherchent à réduire.

Comment en effet les politiques communautaires en faveur des pauvres peuvent-elles échapper aux mêmes biais qui se retrouvent d'ailleurs au niveau national? Comment s'assurer que la participation à ce niveau sera effective et qu'elle ne servira pas de paravent à de nouvelles inégalités? Il faudra bien trouver une méthode qui combine institutionnel, communauté, marché et Etat pour une certaine forme de cogestion de l'approvisionnement de l'eau.

L'un des mécanismes possibles de la gouvernance est l'option de partenariat, dans lequel non seulement le secteur privé et la communauté sont impliqués, mais aussi le gouvernement. La relation entre les organisations (formelles et informelles) et les partenaires ainsi que le cadre institutionnel (formel et informel) est développée dans la partie III, avec une perspective plus

large, y compris des études de cas au Cameroun. Dans la section suivante, nous allons nous concentrer sur les différents partenariats ou les modèles de gouvernance. La notion de régulation est utilisée pour comprendre les lois qui existent pour mettre en œuvre une législation, la présence d'une autorité publique et elle a été définie plus ou moins étroitement avec la nécessité de rendre des comptes (Mehta et al, 1999; Cleaver, 2001), en d'autres termes «*autorité mais contrôle*» (Ostrom, 1992), ou encore interaction des systèmes administratifs légaux avec les institutions et les processus politiques (Nemarundwe, 2003). Une notion plus large de régulation désigne les actions de l'Etat ou la tendance de l'administration locale à restreindre ou à influencer le changement. D'autres concepts ont été proposés pour étendre les limites de la notion de régulation et l'interaction entre les acteurs

2.1.2. La gouvernance de l'eau : hybride et partenariat comme outil

Dans la section précédente, où nous avons développé les différents éléments (multi facettes, multi échelle etc) de la gouvernance et la nécessité de l'interaction, il est nécessaire d'organiser et de coordonner. S.S.Fainstein et N.Fainstein (1996:265) définissent la planification qui, pour nous, est très proche de la coordination, comme *«orientée vers l'avenir, comme la décision publique orientée vers la réalisation des objectifs spécifiques »*. De même, Hudson (1979: 387) la définit comme *«la clairvoyance dans la formulation et la mise en œuvre des programmes et des politiques »*. Cette orientation future et une connexion explicite aux décisions publiques et à la formulation et la mise en œuvre de la politique permet de mieux comprendre les liens entre la gouvernance, la coordination et la planification. Comme la gouvernance, la planification est un domaine théorique difficile, en raison de sa base conceptuelle large qui emprunte à de nombreuses sciences sociales. En effet, dans le chapitre introductif sur la théorie de la planification, Campbell et Fainstein (1996) notent que *«la planification est un sujet insaisissable* » et que « *... le sujet est glissant, et les explications sont souvent tautologiques ou désappointants* ». La rubrique SITAR d'Hudson(1979) est le cadre le plus fréquemment cité pour l'organisation et la classification de la théorie de la planification que nous allons traiter conjointement avec les institutions.

La plupart des chercheurs notent qu'aucun modèle ou approche unique n'est parfait, et que la planification implique souvent le choix entre plusieurs modèles pour répondre à des situations particulières. La théorie de la planification met l'accent sur l'établissement de relations entre plusieurs acteurs, le gouvernement, les groupes d'intérêt et d'autres secteurs importants car

cela est au cœur de la planification participative. Tous ces facteurs sont considérés comme des moyens d'améliorer les politiques de développement et leur mise en œuvre, à travers l'apprentissage social et le consensus (Platteau 2003). Le même auteur soutient également que les modes traditionnels de gouvernance et de planification basés sur la technicité sont mal adaptés à la réalité. Ce qui est nécessaire, c'est «*une vision systémique de la planification et de la gouvernance participative qui mène à l'élaboration des politiques adaptative, innovante et durable*" (Platteau, 2003).

Dans la section ci-dessus, nous avons montré comment la gouvernance multi-échelle est théoriquement liée aux autres éléments de la gouvernance. Il ne suffit évidemment pas de décrire les différents modes de gouvernance pour atteindre une gouvernance durable, car il faut souvent les changer pour les adapter aux réalités. Il existe en effet une relation logique entre nos cinq éléments de la gouvernance décrits plus haut et il est facile de voir comment chaque élément impose des limites plus ou moins contraignantes sur certains aspects des autres. Compte tenu de ce qui précède, le concept de coordination est plus pertinent comme un outil de planification participative. Dans la section suivante, nous allons tenter d'appliquer le concept de gouvernance au domaine de l'eau.

2.1.3. Gouvernance de l'Eau et évolution des modes de gouvernance : le rôle de la société civile

Ces derniers temps, de nouveaux modèles de gouvernance ont fait leur apparition, allant de la décentralisation vers les provinces, les régions et les municipalités au transfert des responsabilités aux organisations de la société civile, les associations d' usagers de l'eau et des organismes de bassin-versants. Ces nouveaux arrangements institutionnels impliquent l'évolution des rôles et responsabilités des organismes publics qui doivent informer, stimuler, coordonner, légiférer... Un bon modèle de gouvernance doit se référer à ces principes à travers la répartition des responsabilités et les relations entre les parties prenantes (Roger et al, 2010).

2.1.3.1. La montée en puissance de la «société civile » et l'évolution des modes de gouvernance

Ces derniers temps, de nombreuses théories ont été élaborées pour justifier l'émergence de nouveaux arrangements institutionnels (formels et informels) qui sont impliqués dans la gouvernance, en plus de l'Etat. Tel que défini par Swyngedouw (1999), la gouvernance en dehors de l'état (en réalité en relation avec certains de ses organes) consiste en l'apparition de

réseaux associatifs privés, de la société civile qui collaborent avec les réseaux de l'État. L'espace urbain et périurbain devient un milieu central où ces nouvelles dispositions apportent des débats contradictoires générateurs de nouveautés. Cela peut se voir là où les organisations de la société civile ont pu atteindre une certaine autonomie à travers une démarche démocratique.

Lorsque nous parlons de la participation ou de l'intégration des acteurs dans la gouvernance de l'eau, c'est dans le but d'éviter que ces organismes agissent en dehors et donc contre l'Etat, avec toutes les conséquences dramatiques en matière de développement. Jusqu'à présent, nous avons utilisé le terme de société civile sans en donner une signification précise.

Il ya beaucoup de confusion sur la notion de «société civile». Il existe en effet un ensemble de définitions anciennes et actuelles sur le contenu et la structure de ce terme, tous en rapport avec les transformations de la société. L'hétérogénéité et la diversité des définitions suggèrent en effet la difficulté de définir de façon consensuelle la société civile. Notre attention dans ce domaine n'est pas de proposer une définition, mais plutôt de nous interroger sur la «nouvelle société civile» dans le contexte de la bonne gouvernance de l'eau. En effet, avec la montée en puissance de la société civile au Cameroun, l'intervention de l'État dans ce nouveau contexte doit intégrer tous les nouveaux acteurs.

A l'instar du concept de «communauté», que nous allons discuter dans la suite, la société civile a toujours été considérée comme une structure homogène avec des intérêts communs. Il faut signaler ici que quelle que soit la définition de la société civile, on retrouve des notions complexes (hétérogénéité, conflit, absence de démocratie…) qui doivent être prises en compte par l'Etat. Les sociétés civiles opèrent dans les sociétés capitalistes ouvertes au dialogue et les négociations peuvent permettre d'aboutir à un compromis, plutôt qu'à la confrontation ou à des activités contraires aux intérêts de l'Etat.

Ces deux situations (collaboration ou conflit) dépendent en grande partie de la capacité de l'Etat à agir en tant que porte-parole politique de la communauté ou quand la société civile participe à la prise de décision en tant que partie prenante à part entière. La société civile peut en revanche être très violente quand elle est convaincue que l'Etat ne la protège pas des agressions de type capitaliste orchestrées par des organismes privés. L'éventualité d'une telle situation serait très problématique car l'opposition entre la société civile et l'État rend impossible la gouvernance.

En fin de compte, si l'Etat est un instrument essentiel pour maintenir la cohésion sociale et la légitimité de ses organes, la société civile et le marché ne sont jamais stables dans le temps. Dans cette optique, l'Etat doit tout le temps adapter ses modes de gouvernance. Quand cela n'est pas constamment fait, la société peut réagir très violemment en recourant à tous les moyens à sa disposition. Dans ce contexte, la question de la coordination se révèle essentielle pour mettre en place des plates-formes communes (règles et règlements, normes, etc) pour mettre en accord les différents acteurs.

2.1.3.2.. Gouvernance et droit d'accès à l'eau : fragmentation versus intégration

Selon certains, la base conceptuelle de la gouvernance de l'eau, de la planification et de la gestion est en plein changement de paradigme (Bouguerra, 2010). Ce changement implique une évolution vers l'optimisation du rendement des ressources à travers l'allocation centralisée et hiérarchisée des ressources en eau grâce à des modèles de gouvernance permettant au plus grand nombre de participer à la prise de décision (Cleaver, 2001).

La littérature concernant ce changement de paradigme1 insiste surtout sur les aspects suivants :

1. une vision plus large du cadre institutionnel pour la gouvernance de l'eau qui soit multi-échelle et qui inclue les structures formelles et informelles (Ostrom, 2001; Baron, 2003 et Bakker, 2010)

2. un mode de coordination qui s'efforce d'être inclusive, concertée et participative dans la nature, et est fondée sur une prise de décision raisonnée (Baron, 2003 et Bakker, 2010).

Dans notre analyse, nous mettons en avant le fait que le secteur de l'eau au Cameroun et l'approvisionnement communautaire en eau en particulier sont fragmentés. Comme précisé dans de la section précédente, la gouvernance n'est pas du seul ressort de l'État mais émerge plutôt de l'interaction entre de nombreux acteurs, y compris le secteur privé et les organismes sans but lucratif. Une bonne gouvernance suppose une coordination sociale qui, au-delà de l'Etat, inclut des acteurs non étatiques, y compris les utilisateurs des ressources, les citoyens, les intérêts du secteur privé et des organisations non gouvernementales dans la prise de décision et sa mise en œuvre (Baron, 2005). Cette coordination peut être formellement institutionnalisée ou exprimée à travers des normes précises déterminant l'accès aux

ressources et cela en évitant les contestations. Dans le domaine de l'eau douce, C.Baron (2003) et C.Bakker (2007) affirment que les décisions concernant l'utilisation et la gestion des ressources en eau doivent impliquer tous les acteurs en plus de l'Etat.

Certaines fonctions sont mieux assumées par d'autres acteurs, sans oublier qu'ils n'ont pas tous la même perception sur la ressource eau. C'est dans cette optique que nous pensons qu'il est inévitable de parler des possibilités de coordination de ces acteurs en définissant leurs droits et le statut de l'eau. La théorie des droits d'accès aux ressources convient mieux pour cette analyse.

2.1.3.3. Le défi de la fragmentation dans la gouvernance de l'eau

La théorie des régimes d'accès est fondée sur l'idée que les droits de propriété déterminent le degré d'accessibilité à l'eau comme une ressource naturelle pour divers utilisateurs et en précisent les modes d'utilisation. Cette section ne se contente pas seulement d'élaborer les éléments d'une structure de gouvernance des ressources, mais aussi évolue face à la dynamique institutionnelle de la gouvernance et des régimes de ressources. Elle identifie les conditions qui déterminent à la fois la stabilité et la dynamique des structures de gouvernance et le droit aux ressources. Le point de départ de notre étude des régimes d'accès est basé sur l'observation qu'ils affectent les comportements individuels dans la gestion des ressources. Les institutions régissant les droits de propriété, les normes sociales, les incitations économiques et les instruments politiques ont de multiples impacts sur le comportement et les stratégies individuelles.

Comme développée par de nombreux auteurs, l'adoption d'un ou de plusieurs modèles de gouvernance nécessite une compréhension de la région qui est concernée. C'est dans cette optique que Karen Bakker (2007) distingue trois catégories de gestion des ressources sur lesquelles les réformes peuvent être entreprises. Tout d'abord, les institutions de gestion des ressources se rapportent aux lois, aux politiques, aux règles, aux normes et aux coutumes par lesquelles les ressources sont régies. Par contre, les organismes de gestion des ressources sont des entités sociales collectives qui régissent l'utilisation des ressources. Enfin, la gouvernance de la gestion des ressources est un processus par lequel les organisations adoptent des institutions de gestion, en d'autres termes, la conception et la gestion des ressources (Bakker 2007).

L'économie institutionnelle et les sciences politiques nous disent comment la dégradation de l'environnement peut être stoppée à l'aide d'une structure institutionnelle et la reconstruction constante. Alors que la théorie de la politique se concentre sur les effets des politiques de ressources et les instruments utilisés, la théorie des droits de propriété met l'accent sur les droits et leurs effets sur la gestion durable des ressources en eau. Je partage le point de vue que l'un de ces aspects détaché de l'autre va certainement donner des résultats négatifs. Par ailleurs, une gestion efficace de l'eau nécessite une définition largement acceptée si l'eau est une marchandise ou un droit humain. Jusqu'à ce jour, aucun droit à l'eau n'est explicitement exprimé dans un traité international, même si le Comité des Nations Unies relatif aux droits économiques, sociaux et culturels a publié en 2002 un commentaire affirmant que toute personne a droit à un « accès suffisant à l'eau, physiquement et financièrement abordable" (ECOSOC 2002).

Néanmoins, il a précisé que le droit à l'eau ne signifie pas que l'accès est libre, car il doit tenir compte des points de vue culturels et religieux sur l'eau comme dans les zones rurales au Cameroun. En effet, le Comité des Nations Unies relatif aux droits économiques, sociaux et culturels a reconnu le statut ambivalent d'un droit sur une ressource quand il définit l'eau comme un bien économique, social et culturel mais aussi une marchandise comme les autres. Cela est vrai pour les autres droits de l'homme (nourriture, logement), mais il est en même temps nécessaire que certaines mesures de sécurité publique ou collective existent pour assurer l'efficacité.

Les institutions sont généralement comprises comme un ensemble de règles qui structurent la relation entre les individus par la détermination de ce qu'ils peuvent faire dans certaines situations. Les institutions sont à la fois le résultat des actions passées et le cadre dans lequel de nouvelles activités ont lieu. Les institutions, et donc les régimes d'accès, peuvent changer avec le temps et devenir de plus en plus différenciés. Notre cadre théorique pour l'analyse du régime institutionnel définit un régime de ressources comme un système institutionnel à deux dimensions (droits de propriété et des politiques publiques) qui, en interaction, affectent l'utilisation et la gestion de la ressource. Ainsi, les principaux éléments de notre cadre de recherche sont donnés par les régimes de ressources, de coordination, les éventuels points de désaccord et leur impact sur la gouvernance de l'eau.

2.1.3.4. Fragmentation des compétences, régimes juridiques polycentriques et gouvernance de l'eau

De nombreux auteurs ont souligné l'impact des droits de propriété sur l'utilisation des ressources en eau et discuté de la façon dont ils agissent comme une barrière contre le changement de comportement dans les cas où un tel changement est souhaité par les décideurs institutionnels. Les droits de propriété, c'est important, surtout quand ils sont enracinés dans les traditions coutumières de distribution et d'utilisation de l'eau. Le travail d'Elinor Ostrom est bien connu dans ce domaine. Dans son livre « Governing the commons. The evolution of institutions for collective action », elle souligne l'importance des arrangements institutionnels régionaux et locaux qui sont souvent basées sur une longue tradition de droits informels de l'eau mais communément partagée (Ostrom, 1990). En Europe, Bernard Barraqué a fait une analyse de l'influence des droits de l'eau sur l'administration dans divers pays européens. Il a remarqué que "*les écologistes semblent avoir négligé l'importance d'une analyse spécifique des lois coutumières qui régissent les biens communs, à partir desquelles on pourrait essayer de tirer des innovations institutionnelles pour notre bien commun présent et futur*». Il remarque que le caractère local des «*institutions coutumières les rend moins visibles pour ceux qui se concentrent principalement sur les systèmes légaux ou réglementaires au niveau de l'Etat* ».

Des coutumes considérant l'eau comme propriété commune ont été maintenues et même développées sous l'État libéral moderne dans des zones soumises à des inondations ou des sécheresses. Aux États- Unis, deux grandes doctrines juridiques ont fusionné pour traiter des eaux de surface: la doctrine des riverains (l'eau n'est pas possédée, le propriétaire a le droit « d'usufruit» seulement adoptée dans les Etats humides de l'Est et la doctrine de l' appropriation (le droit sur l'eau est acquis par l'usage actuel, le premier utilisateur acquiert le droit le plus solide, le deuxième utilisateur un peu moins, etc) qui s'applique à des formes diverses dans les Etats occidentaux plus aride (Mehta, L. et al 1999). Les deux doctrines montrent comment des circonstances hydrologiques spécifiques ont intégré les coutumes dans des institutions juridiques. Dans leur livre sur les principes d'utilisation de l'eau au Moyen-Orient, Leach et al (1999) remarquent que les modes d'utilisation de l'eau au Moyen-Orient ne sont pas bien connus en raison du fait que les systèmes juridiques opèrent souvent de manière «*mystérieuse et approximative* ". Les principes d'utilisation de l'eau au Moyen-Orient sont souvent basés sur de vieilles règles et des coutumes islamiques. "*Cet art raffiné de gestion de la rareté ne signifie pas que la société fonctionne de manière égalitaire. (...) L'eau dans ces régions*

raconte l'histoire de la société et ses modes de partage sont encore aujourd'hui un véritable document sur l'ordre social ». (Leach et al, 1997)

Les mêmes auteurs continuent en affirmant que la raréfaction de la ressource, l'augmentation de la demande, et l'attachement sentimental des individus et des gouvernements peuvent influencer le statut de l'eau. L'eau est en train de devenir un bien plutôt qu'un élément librement disponible et peu réglementé dans les économies africaines. Pour ré- attribuer un droit à l'eau et en garantir l'accès, la réglementation dans l'Afrique moderne doit gérer un mélange extrêmement complexe du droit coutumier, de codes calqués sur le droit occidental et les principes récents du droit international (Leach et al, 1999).

Le résultat des mesures de gestion sont incertains en raison de la complexité des systèmes à gérer et les complexités du milieu environnemental et socio- économiques qui influencent la performance des stratégies de gestion mises en œuvre. On peut distinguer différents types d'incertitudes dans les systèmes locaux de distribution : l'incertitude dans la compréhension du système, l'imprévisibilité inhérente à certains facteurs, les incertitudes dans la mise en œuvre du cadre réglementaire ... La gestion adaptative intègre l'incertitude comme un principe fondamental dans toute approche de gestion.

Pendant ce temps, un problème aigu reste à régler, quel que soit le modèle adopté, à savoir la nécessité de préciser à qui attribuer quoi, où et comment. Dans cette optique, la nécessité d'un compromis entre tous les acteurs est inévitable. Il est nécessaire de trouver un accord sur les grands enjeux de la gestion des réserves d'eau locales. Dans le cadre des Hautes Terres de l'Ouest du Cameroun présentant une multitude d'acteurs (avec des intérêts divers) avec qui, au sein de la communauté, les contrats pourront être signés, ce qui est sans doute la première question à se poser en premier lieu. A Kumbo et à Bali par exemple, nous avons réalisé que pendant plus de 40 et 50 ans respectivement, ils ont eu au moins trois modèles de gestion à des conditions proche de la faillite. Dans le cas de Kumbo, de 1973 à 1991, l'approvisionnement en eau était sous le contrôle de la SNEC (Société Nationale des Eaux du Cameroun) qui était contrôlée par l'Etat. Entre 1991 et 1992 suivit une période entièrement contrôlée par la communauté avec la NSODA (Nso Cultural and Developement Association). Il est actuellement contrôlé conjointement par l'Autorité de l'eau de Kumbo (Kumbo Water Association) et la municipalité. Nous avons réservé dans cette thèse une section pour analyser les différents modèles de gestion mais nous pouvons d'ores et déjà dire que la recherche d'un

modèle unique est une illusion et il faudra encore beaucoup de temps pour atteindre le modèle souhaité. Cela est aussi vrai pour Bali et Bafou. Nous pourrions peut-être trouver les raisons de cet échec en nous référant à la littérature qui a été réalisée dans ce domaine, comme on le verra plus tard.

Pour conclure, on peut affirmer que les droits coutumiers sur l'eau constituent une barrière institutionnelle au changement et à une gouvernance plus durable des ressources. Ils préservent les modes existantes de gestion de l'eau. Le débat sur la reformulation de ces droits coutumiers affecte non seulement la durabilité des ressources en eau, mais aussi l'équité de l'accès. Comme l'affirme K. Bakker, *«une des questions les plus controversées est la différence entre l'eau comme un droit social et de l'eau comme une marchandise. L'eau pourrait être les deux à la fois, et pourrait être ni l'un ni l'autre. L'eau n'est pas un droit social dans le sens où tout le monde a le droit d'obtenir autant d'eau qu'il le souhaite. Mais l'eau est un droit social tant qu'il est le fondement de la vie. De même, l'eau n'est pas une marchandise dans le sens où tout le monde a le droit de la posséder comme on possède d'autres produits. Mais l'eau est quelque chose de précieux et défini, donc négociables et en cours d'évaluation économique (...)* » (Bakker, 2007). Dans cette section de cette thèse, nous soulevons la question des droits sociopolitiques d'accès à l'au. Dans les chapitres 5, 6 et 7, nous allons nous positionner sur cette controverse car elle est liée à un débat sur la tarification de l'eau communautaire au Cameroun.

Pour ce chapitre, il est également nécessaire de se concentrer sur l'élaboration d'un droit de propriété comme un sous-système d'un régime de ressources. Comment définissons-nous les droits de propriété? Les droits de propriété peuvent être compris comme des relations sociales qui définissent l'ayant-droit à l'égard de quelque chose de valeur par rapport à tous les autres. *«Les droits ne peuvent exister que quand il ya un mécanisme social qui donne des droits et lie les individus à ces droits. (...) Remarquez que les droits n'ont d'effets que quand il ya un système d'autorité qui accepte de défendre l'intérêt d'un titulaire de droits dans un domaine particulier*» (Bromley et al 1989:15) . Le manque de définition sur les droits des citoyens à l'eau peut rendre impossible la gouvernance, ce qui conduirait à une instabilité permanente. De longues périodes de stabilité pourraient être suivies par de courtes périodes de changements radicaux causés par des facteurs externes comme une catastrophe naturelle ou une crise politique. Cependant, chaque crise conduit à un changement radical, mais chaque changement n'est pas causé par une crise. En d'autres termes, il pourrait y avoir plusieurs

déclencheurs du changement, car cela dépend des conditions dans lesquelles le changement a lieu. Pour une théorie sur le changement de régime de propriété, nous devons identifier de telles conditions, c'est-à-dire ce qui peut déclencher le changement ou au contraire conduire à des conflits. Dans la section suivante, en ciblant les relations entre les acteurs, nous avons essayé de regrouper quelques-unes des causes possibles de conflits et la nécessité de négociations en matière de gouvernance de l'eau et cela à travers la notion de communauté.

2.2. L'approche par le concept de communauté

Nous avons utilisé la communauté comme une base pour explorer la nature de l'interaction entre les différents acteurs de la gestion communautaire. Les relations de pouvoir et les pratiques des différents acteurs sont expliquées. En outre, ce chapitre développe le cadre conceptuel de la communauté et sa participation à des projets gérés en commun.

Dans le sens le plus littéraire, la gouvernance communautaire signifie la gouvernance exercée par les communautés elles-mêmes (Agrawal, 1999, 2001). Pour des raisons pratiques, la gouvernance est entendue comme se produisant à quatre niveaux: international, national, régional et local/communautaire. La gouvernance communautaire englobe les valeurs locales et communautaires, qui sont utilisées de manière interchangeable dans la littérature spécialisée. On a affaire à un groupe de théories qui traitent les gouvernements locaux comme une forme de gouvernance communautaire. Dans ce travail, ces deux aspects sont traités séparément. Tel qu'il est appliqué à la gouvernance urbaine, le concept de gouvernance communautaire exige une conceptualisation globale permettant de mettre l'accent sur la définition des espaces et des relations qui peuvent exister au sein des villes.

2.2.1. La communauté dans la gestion « communautaire »

La complexité du mot «communauté» a été mise en avant par Agrawal (1999), qui affirme que son caractère hétérogène fait qu'il ne peut pas être facilement défini, mais son rôle central dans la vie quotidienne signifie qu'il ne peut pas être ignoré. Selon Cousins (1997), il n'existe aucun acception universellement partagée du concept de «communauté», mais plutôt différentes visions qui se chevauchent et qui parfois se complètent. Beaucoup de personnes considèrent la notion de «communauté» comme un mythe et ont rejetée, affirmant qu'il est impossible de traiter d'une chose qui n'existe pas (Cousins, 1992).

Pendant les années 1980 et 90, la gestion communautaire a commencé à prendre de l'importance en raison de plusieurs facteurs concomitants tels que l'insatisfaction avec les résultats des projets, une planification centralisée et à grande échelle ainsi que l'exclusion des populations consommatrices des ressources. La réussite relative des projets participatifs et les critiques croissantes sur le développement non représentatif ont donné un nouvel élan à l'approche communautaire. Des chercheurs tels que Giddens (1984) ont préconisé que les communautés rurales ou traditionnelles sont en harmonie avec l'environnement et qu'elles ont démontré que des modèles établis depuis longtemps ont fait la preuve d'une utilisation durable et équitable des ressources.

Définir la gestion communautaire n'est pas une tâche facile. Divers gouvernements ont démontré l'importance de la «participation» de la communauté face à la pression politique et économique (Ntsebesa, 2006). L'agenda des bailleurs de fonds est de promouvoir la participation locale à la gestion «durable» des ressources et le développement, à travers le transfert de la gestion des ressources dans les mains des communautés locales (Giddens , 1984; Cousins , 1992). D'autres parts, les représentants des peuples autochtones préconisent le respect des droits des populations locales, des connaissances et des cultures afin de mieux servir les intérêts locaux (Giddens, 1984; Cousins, 1992). Partant du constat que les populations locales ont un plus grand intérêt dans l'utilisation durable des ressources que l'Etat, avec comme hypothèse que les communautés locales sont plus au courant des processus écologiques et sont plus en mesure de gérer efficacement les ressources locales à travers des pratiques traditionnelles, les programmes communautaires de gestion sont remises à l'honneur (Giddens , 1984). Par ailleurs, dans le discours de la gestion communautaire, les collectivités locales sont généralement habilitées à mettre en place des institutions appropriées pour la gestion des ressources naturelles (Cousins, 1992). Par conséquent, les collectivités locales sont considérées comme plus efficaces au niveau des coûts, car leurs membres sont en contact permanent, limitant ainsi les coûts intermédiaires.

Néanmoins, toutes les décisions de la « communauté» en matière de gestion des ressources naturelles ne sont pas nécessairement efficaces. Très souvent, les relations proches souvent considérées comme apparemment inoffensives, peuvent pourtant conduire à des désaccords menant à des conflits (Mc Cay et al, 1987). Par conséquent, les images qu'on a de la «communauté» peuvent avoir une influence décisive dans la mise en œuvre de projets communautaires. La littérature, les politiques et les projets en rapport avec la gestion communautaire ont dépeint les communautés comme groupe social distinct dans un lieu

géographique, ayant une culture et une vie commune en harmonie (Leach et al, 1999; Ntsebesa, 1996, 2006).

En outre, les théoriciens de la propriété commune ont propagé dans leurs arguments sur la notion unifiée et homogène de la communauté, l'importance des institutions informelles, l'efficacité, l'équité et la durabilité (Agrawal, 2001). En insistant sur le rôle des institutions locales dans la création de collectivités capables de coopérer les uns avec les autres, pour l'accès et le contrôle des ressources naturelles, les théoriciens de la propriété commune ont sous-estimé les dimensions du pouvoir. Cela renforce la notion de «communauté» dans la gestion de l'eau (Platteau, 2003; Ostrom, 1990).

La littérature sur la Propriété des Ressources communes (PRC) a été élaborée en réponse à la célèbre «Tragédie des biens communs» de Hardin (1977). Cette littérature établit une distinction entre les situations en libre accès (dont la thèse de Hardin pourrait être un peu l'application) et de véritables situations dans lesquelles les institutions jouent un rôle important dans la régulation de l'utilisation des ressources et leur gestion (Bromley et Cernea, 1989). Un grand nombre d'études sur la gestion des biens communs a joué un rôle fondamental dans la mise en évidence de l'importance des institutions locales dans la gestion des ressources naturelles. Les théoriciens des biens communs ont suggéré que les individus vont gérer collectivement les ressources communes lorsque les avantages de la mise en place institutionnel (règles et moyens de mise en œuvre) sont limités à une petite communauté stable (McCay et Acheson, 1987; Ostrom, 1990). Certains d'entre eux comme E. Ostrom (1990) basent leurs raisonnement sur la théorie des jeux pour analyser le dilemme de l'action collective et précisent que les institutions ou les règles peuvent être à dessein fabriquées pour produire une action collective et d'exécuter certaines fonctions de gestion des ressources naturelles. E. Ostrom, par des études comparatives, constate que la gestion efficace des ressources couramment mises en commun par les collectivités locales partage souvent un ensemble de huit «principes de base» : i) des limites clairement définies; ii) des règles en harmonie avec les conditions locales , iii) les personnes concernées peuvent participer à la modification des règles d'exploitation; iv) les gestionnaires sont responsables devant les propriétaires; v) des sanctions graduelles contre les contrevenants; vi) un accès rapide à des mécanismes de résolution des conflits; vii) la reconnaissance du droit d'organisation par les autorités gouvernementales et viii) les entreprises impliquées, quand la ressource fait partie d'un système plus vaste (Ostrom , 1990).

Le principe de coordination pour E. Ostrom est "*un élément ou une condition essentielle qui aide à expliquer le succès de ces institutions dans le maintien des ressources communes et à obtenir le consentement de génération en génération de ceux qui sont concernés par les règles en usage*" (Ostrom, 1990:90). La plupart des ouvrages sur la gestion des biens communs considèrent les situations locales et fixent les conditions (communément appelées principes d'Ostrom), qui conduiront à l'action collective en indiquant les limites claires des ressources et l'homogénéité socio- économique entre les utilisateurs (Ostrom, 1990). En conséquence, les considérations historiques et contemporaines sur les «biens communs» montrent que les utilisateurs de ressources mettent en place des arrangements institutionnels et des régimes de gestion qui leur permettent de distribuer équitablement des avantages, sur de longues périodes et avec seulement des pertes limitées d'efficacité (Agrawal, 1999; Ostrom, 1992), ce qui est en contradiction avec la tragédie des biens communs de Hardin (1977). Bien que les données empiriques suggèrent que les modèles considèrent les communautés comme des entités homogènes, en réalité, il existe une grande diversité dans les communautés en termes de classes, de fortune, d'âge, de sexe, d'ethnie ou de religion (Agrawal et al, 2001, 1999; Leach et al, 1997a).

De même, se basant sur ces même données empiriques, les chercheurs ont suggéré que seuls de très petits groupes peuvent s'organiser efficacement de la manière suggérée par les modèles, car ils présument que l'homogénéité est liée à la taille (Agrawal, 2001). Ces dernières années, la conception d'E.Ostrom a été critiquée par les spécialistes du développement et des chercheurs sur la base qu'elle emploie "*des hypothèses simplistes sur l'utilisation d'une seule ressource, un modèle de rationalité statique, l'analyse exclusive de la dynamique interne du système de gestion collective et de l'hypothèse que les résultats de la gestion collective sont déterminés par des principes prédéfinis*» (Leach et al., 1999). En outre, les différents modèles ont négligé le rôle des facteurs contextuels et externes tels que les exigences du marché, de la technologie et de la pression démographique, et comment les politiques de l'Etat interagissent avec les institutions locales et les systèmes de ressources naturelles dans l'élaboration de l'action collective (Agrawal, 2001). Ces même modèles ont été critiqués comme étant trop limités pour analyser les institutions de gestion des ressources dynamiques (Agrawal et al, 1999), pendant que d'autres études ont mis en cause l'idéalisation des systèmes de connaissances indigènes, alors qu'en réalité ils ont été complètement perturbés et existent souvent comme une ombre de leur forme originale (Platteau, 2003; Ribot, 1999).

En se basant sur ce point de vue des théoriciens de la propriété privée qui considèrent la «communauté» comme homogène, des travaux universitaires sur les institutions ont négligé les questions concernant les différences et les intérêts divergents des utilisateurs des ressources (Mehta et al, 1999). Les travaux sur la théorie de l'action collective ont négligé le fait que les institutions, en plus de renforcer la coopération, peuvent également aggraver les conflits, les divisions entre factions et exacerber la volonté de puissance (Mehta et al, 1999). En outre, les théoriciens de la propriété commune ont mis l'accent sur les groupes locaux, les institutions et les facteurs liés au système des ressources, et ont ignoré la réalité des communautés locales existant dans un environnement plus large.

Dans cette perspective, les communautés ne peuvent pas être considérées comme statiques car elles sont composées de gens qui interprètent et façonnent le monde qui les entoure (Long et Long, 1992). Dans l'ensemble, cette perspective considère le changement dans la société différemment des récits de gestion par la communauté, qui parlent plutôt de perturbation externe à une communauté. Il ya un certain niveau d'inadéquation dans la conceptualisation des communautés spatialisées, les structures homogènes et des ensembles de compréhension partagée, souvent mis en avant par les partisans de la «gestion communautaire » (Agrawal et Gibson 1999). Ils font valoir d'une part que, à un niveau de représentation donné, les communautés existantes correspondent rarement à l'idée de petites entités harmonieuses, coopérant entre elles et partageant les mêmes idéaux (Agrawal et Gibson 1999). Au contraire, au niveau conceptuel, une relation directe entre « communauté», partageant la même vision de la société, n'est pas facile à établir (Agrawal et Gibson 1999). Nous comptons illustrer cela à travers l'exemple des Hautes Terres de l'Ouest Cameroun. Des études récentes de gestion communautaire ont commencé à examiner l'hétérogénéité des communautés et la décentralisation de la gestion des ressources a affecté les différents groupes communautaires et comment les collectivités peuvent influer sur la gouvernance de l'eau. Ces études ont montré que la gestion par les communautés, qui se composent de plusieurs acteurs ayant souvent des intérêts contradictoires, dépasse le simple ciblage des «communautés» concernées. C'est qu'en réalité, les communautés sont fortement différenciées pour plusieurs raisons qui comprennent des aspects politiques, économiques et sociales que nous allons démontrer dans les sections suivantes de cette thèse.

En tentant de définir la notion de gouvernance, Froger et Oberti (2002) soulignent le fait qu'il remplace le gouvernement qui, soulignent-ils, est fortement dirigée par l'Etat et présente beaucoup de limites. Contrairement à l'action de l'État qu'ils qualifient de «gouvernance

autoritaire», ils proposent « la gouvernance participative» qui suppose l'implication de toutes les parties prenantes dans le processus décisionnel, c'est-à-dire la conception de règles, de normes et de politiques pouvant respecter les exigences environnementales. Dans cette optique, ces auteurs proposent comme définition de la gouvernance la capacité de produire des décisions cohérentes, élaborer des politiques efficaces de coordination entre les acteurs publics et privés, au sein d'une arène fragmentée. Nous remarquerons que, progressivement, les communautés ont développé la capacité de concevoir des projets d'intérêt collectif qui nécessitent un véritable dialogue entre les acteurs, la transparence et qui tiennent compte des différents intérêts et points de vue.

Au Cameroun, on retrouve une grande diversité d'approche sur la philosophie de la gestion communautaire des projets d'eau potable. Cette situation explique pourquoi il existe une multiplicité de visions, perceptions et définitions de ce concept par les chercheurs, les organisations internationales et les acteurs dans le domaine de l'eau. La notion de «communauté» a elle-même fait l'objet de beaucoup de discussions par un éventail d'universitaires tels que les politologues, les géographes sociaux, des sociologues et des psychologues spécialistes des communautés. Nous pouvons ainsi dire que «*la plupart des universitaires sont d'accord pour affirmer que la communauté se compose de personnes en interactions sociales au sein d'une zone géographique et ayant un ou plusieurs autres liens*" (Lekunze, 2001).

Toutefois, aucun des concepts proposés pour le remplacer n'est satisfaisant. Des expressions telles que identité commune, affinité, le destin commun, le partage des préoccupations communes, le sens de l'objectif commun, le noyau de la communauté, le sentiment d'appartenance, un ensemble économique et social cohérent, agissant dans l'intérêt de la communauté et parlant d'une seule voix, ont été proposées, mais chacun a tendance à ne couvrir que certains aspects des grandes dimensions dans lesquelles le concept de «communauté» peut être appliqué dans les administrations locales[1].

2.2.2 Comprendre les communautés camerounaises

La complexité de la société au Cameroun nous a poussé à analyser les problèmes de l'eau dans un contexte plus large, celui de la gouvernance. Tout au long de notre problématique, nous

[1] Dans le cadre de mon master en 2008, ce concept a été élaboré pour orienter la réflexion vers une vision commune de la notion à partir d'auteurs célèbres comme Richard Tyler (2006) et Foucault (1979) qui ont retracé l'origine de ce terme dès le XIVe siècle.

présentons le rôle des différents acteurs, les relations et les perspectives en regard avec les problèmes de gestion des ressources en eau au Cameroun, avec un accent particulier sur l'approvisionnement communautaire en eau. Nous examinons aussi le degré de cohérence ou de disparité entre les différentes parties prenantes par rapport aux pratiques officielles réelles. Malgré l'importance cruciale de réformes institutionnelles pour renforcer l'impact de la gouvernance de l'eau à différents niveaux, des différences considérables persistent quant à la façon dont les institutions de l'eau sont abordées et évaluées (Perret et al, 2007). Les chapitres 3 et 4 ont été consacrés aux fondements théoriques en en discutant les différents courants pour comprendre la société camerounaise face à la gouvernance de l'eau. Ils utilisent les concepts de gouvernance et de communauté comme une entrée pour discuter de la gestion communautaire de l'eau et ils critiquent la littérature sur la composition et la participation des communautés, en mettant en évidence la variété des modèles de gestion des ressources communes. Ces chapitres traitent davantage des concepts tels que la participation, le pouvoir, ainsi qu'une approche analytique axée sur le rôle des acteurs (à titre individuel ou en groupe) dans le processus d'interaction.

Le chapitre 4 donne un bref aperçu du concept de communauté en matière de gestion de l'eau potable au niveau des politiques, des projets et des programmes. Il se propose de montrer en outre des éléments sur la façon dont la gestion de l'eau dans les Hautes Terres de l'Ouest Cameroun est influencée par des facteurs sociopolitique, culturel, institutionnel et écologique. Le chapitre aborde aussi la question de la plateforme idéale entre la communauté et ses autres partenaires mais qui met en avant la gestion participative et démocratique, que ce soit sur les bassins versants ou les systèmes d'adduction d'eau potable. Mais d'un autre côté, des faits tels que la politique locale, les relations de pouvoir affectent la gouvernance de l'eau comme c'est le cas au Cameroun comme nous le verrons plus loin.

On peut illustrer cette situation par l'exemple de la lutte pour le pouvoir qui fait rage entre les chefs des Hautes Terres du Cameroun. En effet, les luttes au sein de l'Association des « Fons » du Nord-Ouest montrent que malgré le fait que cette région semble constituer une entité homogène au niveau physique, culturel et social, il existe bien des disparités qui peuvent contrer les efforts nationaux en matière de gouvernance. Ici, nous réduisons la notion de gouvernance à l'application de règles identiques pour l'ensemble du pays.

Effet, les communautés de la région du Nord-Ouest sont des entités disparates plutôt rivales entre elles. Nous avons utilisé ces luttes de pouvoir pour relativiser cette notion de

communauté. Il s'agit de partir de la diversité culturelle pour montrer la participation des associations locales, mais aussi comment elle peut être un obstacle à des projets nationaux. Nous soutenons l'idée que l'échec des projets locaux d'adduction d'eau dans les Hautes Terres de l'Ouest s'explique en grande partie par une gouvernance insuffisante mais nous sommes également convaincus que c'est en raison de la diversité culturelle/communautaire au Cameroun. L'Etat camerounais rencontre de nombreuses difficultés à mettre en place des lois et des politiques acceptées par tous. Il existe une prise de conscience de l'identité qui joue négativement et qui pousse à la dislocation et la désintégration de la société, l'empêchant d'atteindre des objectifs communs au-delà des villages. Nous postulons que la nature hétérogène des groupes (ou villages) peut conduire à un affaiblissement de l'État en général, ce que prouve le caractère spontané et la prolifération des associations de natifs. Nous avons la conviction que les désaccords au sein de villages autour des projets empêchent l'élaboration de projets communs à cause de la résistance des intérêts plus restreints et contradictoires qui tendent à encourager les nombreux mini-projets fragmentés.

Ces programmes locaux mènent inévitablement à la concurrence pour le prestige et la position entre les communautés qui a caractérisé les relations intercommunautaires au cours de la période coloniale et postcoloniale dans la région. Alors que la plupart des litiges fonciers dans le Nord-Ouest étaient dus à la politique expansionniste des chefs de village pour soumettre leurs voisins, ces conflits se sont intensifiés avec les nombreuses redéfinitions des frontières entre les Allemands et les Britanniques. La Grande-Bretagne a fait une tentative sérieuse pour régler ces différends mais le gouvernement du Cameroun indépendant n'a pas continué dans cette direction. En raison de cet échec, les villes et les villages ont décidé de revenir aux frontières antérieures pour des raisons politiques, économiques et sociales. Les solutions à ces différends ne peuvent être atteintes que si le gouvernement décide de bonne foi, et en utilisant un dialogue constructif, d'examiner la situation socio-économique de la population.

Nous pensons donc que les relations intercommunautaires qui en résultent agissent comme une barrière à l'Etat qui n'arrive pas à créer une seule unité administrative avec des personnes qui avaient formé des entités distinctes et rivales. Nous avons tenté de montrer que le repli identitaire pousse à la coopération au sein de ces communautés par le biais des associations par exemple, et à des relations conflictuelles avec les autres communautés. Cette dernière situation joue en grande partie un rôle négatif dans la mise en place de projets d'eau communs à cause de configurations administratives non-fonctionnelles.

L'un des arguments de base pour étayer cette assertion, c'est que cette fluctuation entre similitude et différence entre les communautés sont respectivement le résultat des processus d'organisation communautaire et de construction identitaire qui caractérise les Grassfields depuis la période précoloniale. Afin de comprendre le degré de division qui existe dans les Hautes Terres de l'Ouest, nous pouvons donner l'exemple du groupe "Ngemba". Ce terme regroupe des populations parlant des langues identiques classées comme Ngemba, un terme inventé à l'époque coloniale à partir d'une expression locale signifiant «C'est à dire». Si on se base sur le Ngemba, nous pouvons identifier plus de 15 villages-chefferies qui occupent une superficie inférieure à 1000 km² et qui possèdent chacun des systèmes d'adduction d'eau communautaires. Il est difficile de représenter tous ces villages sur une carte, mais nous nous sommes efforcé de montrer les 5 principales chefferies et certaines chefferies mineures.

Cet exemple peut être multiplié et la région du Nord-Ouest seule regroupe plus de 90 villages différents qui parlent des langues différentes et avec des limites bien définies et il existe encore des guerres intertribales pour mater les voisins et agrandir les terres. On le voit bien, l'utilisation du concept « communauté » dans les Hautes Terres de l'Ouest ne peut pas se faire dans sa forme la plus simple, car ce serait une simplification grossière de la diversité et de la complexité qui caractérisent la région. Il est clair que la diversité culturelle agit plus comme un obstacle à des projets et des politiques communs comme nous allons le démontrer dans la suite.

Conclusion

La gouvernance de l'eau n'est pas un simple processus compétitif par lequel la ressource est un « atout politique " que les politiciens locaux peuvent utiliser pour avoir de voix. Cette partie théorique de notre travail a montré comment comprendre la réalité derrière les façades de la politique, les fausses idées sur les capacités et le rôle des communautés. La prise en compte des diverses relations institutionnelles concurrentes et qui se chevauchent au niveau local est essentiel pour veiller à ce que de nouveaux projets sur l'eau soient plus efficients, car il faut s'adapter à la nature complexe et hétérogène de «l'environnement de la communauté». Le processus même de changement des perspectives et des approches politiques au niveau national à travers la législation et l'élaboration des politiques brouille le tableau institutionnel car ne tenant pas compte des niveaux inférieurs.

Aborder les aspects politiques dans la fourniture de l'eau permettra d'assurer un milieu plus serein dans lequel il sera possible d'établir des formes de gestion communautaire qui soient ajustées à l'environnement local. Cela nécessite la création d'une interface plus efficace entre les communautés et les dirigeants politiques locaux, ainsi que de meilleurs acteurs politiques, qu'ils soient informels (chefs traditionnels) ou formelle (maire ou Préfets). Enfin, cela exige aussi la création de structures institutionnelles locales entre les communautés comme le regroupement des comités de points d'eau à un certain niveau, afin de faciliter et de mieux résoudre les problèmes d'accès à l'eau dans les petites villes.

La principale idée que nous avançons dans cette partie de notre travail est que l'incertitude quant à ce qui constitue une «communauté» et comment définir ses frontières a un impact significatif sur la gouvernance. Dans le pire des cas, cela peut entraîner de considérer la communauté comme l'élément de base du développement. Nous avons identifié quatre thèmes interdépendants et qui se chevauchent: les éléments de gouvernance avec une attention particulière sur la dimension institutionnelle, la coordination, la participation et la communauté. Ces thèmes ne se rapportent pas spécifiquement aux communautés, leurs intérêts, leur l'identité ou leur attachement, mais plutôt à des concepts plus larges qui relient les différentes dimensions de la communauté.

3. Multiplicité des acteurs et le « casse-tête » de la gouvernance de l'eau au Cameroun

Introduction

Une de nos hypothèses de départ montre que les communautés camerounaises sont diverses, pourvus de systèmes non-linéaires, dynamiques et présentant des comportements divergents. Néanmoins tout au long de la troisième partie de cette thèse, nous montrerons qu'elles offrent un potentiel riche pour comprendre comment les processus d'engagement communautaire se mettent en place, par la coopération ou par la contestation. Dans la section précédente, nous cherchions à montrer que les communautés ne sont pas aussi unies qu'on le croit. Dans cette troisième partie, nous admettons plutôt que les individus cherchent à s'associer pour défendre leurs affinités culturelles et protéger leurs intérêts communs. L'analyse détaillée des communautés camerounaises peut corriger les perceptions erronées sur la façon dont les

différences communautaires jouent sur le terrain, et de nouvelles observations montrent que la crise peut donner une voix aux groupes «marginalisés» dont on ne parle pas habituellement.

Cela donne une image des communautés camerounaises et présente en détail «le monde de l'eau » dans les Hautes Terres de l'Ouest à travers les cas de Kumbo, Bali et Bafou et comment les différents aspects liés à l'eau sont négociés dans les pratiques journalières et les interactions entre les acteurs. Cette partie explore les organisations sociales des petites villes, les structures formelles et informelles et le rôle que les hiérarchies jouent dans la distribution de l'eau. En outre, un des chapitres se penche sur le rôle de petites villes, fabriques socioculturelles dont la distribution de l'eau est une des composantes.

Nous relèverons des limites dans l'ensemble du secteur, notamment à travers des hiérarchies floues et la prééminence de l'informel. Notre analyse insiste sur la nécessité de reconnaître et de souligner la présence de conflits comme une partie du fonctionnement normal du processus démocratique. La priorité pour l'avenir serait de savoir comment construire un espace public démocratique fonctionnel, plutôt que de réprimer les conflits et les différences. Par exemple, notre étude explore comment la participation des communautés dans les programmes de développement et de gestion de l'eau et l'impact des réclamations des différents acteurs peuvent permettre la sécurisation des intérêts des uns et des autres. Cela illustre comment les relations de pouvoir et l'exclusion sociale influencent la société et comment des groupes marginalisés participent au débat de manière formelle ou informelle, les conflits autour de l'eau leur servant d'arène pour exprimer des revendications d'ordre politique.

3.1. L'approvisionnement communautaire en eau comme une arène pour des revendications variées

De ce qui précède, il est évident que le processus démocratique au Cameroun est au point mort, et que les partis de l'opposition et d'autres sections de la société civile, semblent plutôt lents (pour ne pas dire incapable) pour apporter des solutions pratiques à la désillusion actuelle.

Pourtant, il est curieux que les partis d'opposition, les médias, les églises et d'autres associations n'aient pas réussi à capitaliser (dans un sens positif) sur l'attente généralisée de la base pour un ordre social et politique plus démocratique.

Les enquêtes et les résultats électoraux ont à plusieurs reprises laissé peu de doute sur la volonté de la majorité des Camerounais souhaitant le changement. Ils veulent être actifs dans les questions d'intérêt public, et se libérer du joug de la misère dont ils sont victimes.

Mais alors, quels sont les obstacles qui les empêchent d'y arriver ?

L'intérêt du chapitre 4 était d'appliquer le concept de société civile tel que développé dans la deuxième partie de cette étude. Le concept de société civile a acquis des significations différentes et a été utilisé à des fins différentes ; nous y avons eu recours pour examiner les relations entre les différents secteurs ainsi que leurs structures et leurs fonctions. En outre, et plus importantes encore sont les différentes actions de la société pour contester les rapports de force existants entre les organisations de la société et les institutions de l'Etat, le rôle qu'elles jouent dans la prestation des services de l'eau. La capacité de la société civile à contester les pouvoirs établis de l'Etat peut être illustrée par des résistances comme celles de Tombel, de Kumbo ou de Bali que nous avons présentées dans la thèse.

Leurs protestations ne peuvent être considérée ni illégales, ni illégitimes dans la mesure où l'eau est utilisée comme prétexte pour d'autres revendications. Si nous prenons en compte la volonté de la société de récupérer les systèmes d'adduction de l'eau de façon violente, on peut facilement considérer leur action comme illégale. D'un autre côté, en considérant le fait que la société utilise l'approvisionnement en eau pour exprimer ses revendications sociopolitiques et économiques, leurs actions peuvent être considérées comme légitimes.

Les études de cas présentées dans cette section reflètent en grande partie la mobilisation (temporaire ou permanente) des communautés établies dans les quartiers en vue de résister, affronter ou faire face à l'Etat. Notre compréhension de la crise au départ centrée sur les effets des prix de l'eau, a été placée dans un contexte de long terme avec la crise économique des années 1980 et la crise politique du début des années 1990. Ces deux situations ont été associées à des politiques économiques néolibérales, la dérèglementation et la marginalisation des communautés. Nous voyons ces « crises « (économique, politique ou de l'eau) comme des moments inhérents au système social actuel, et elles peuvent créer des fissures que peuvent utiliser les collectivités pour trouver des opportunités et changer de modèle de gestion.

Notre compréhension de la crise nous amène à faire les contestations suivantes : les crises sont multiples et se chevauchent (économique, environnementale et sociopolitique), on les

retrouve à plusieurs échelles géographiques et elles possèdent des caractères complexes et chaotiques.

La réponse des communautés à la crise tire son origine de processus complexes de long, moyen et court terme, n'ayant souvent pas de relation de cause à effet. Nous avons trouvé un certain nombre de catalyseurs spécifiques relatifs à la situation contemporaine et qui agissent comme des facteurs mobilisateurs. En particulier, un sentiment de perte de contrôle de la terre ou des installations des ressources en eau a été un facteur de mobilisation important, cela étant en rapport avec le problème d'influence politique. Il est probable que ce type de catalyseurs augmente en fonction de l'accroissement de l'austérité financière. Une compréhension des causes structurelles plus larges ainsi que des questions à court terme et des causes de déclenchement immédiat s'impose pour mieux appréhender les réponses communautaires face aux crises. Alors que de nombreuses origines sont fondées sur de simples questions agissant comme catalyseur, nos exemples montrent qu'un ensemble de questions plus vastes et interconnectées émergent, à travers des valeurs générales relatives à la dignité, l'égalité et la justice.

3.2. Les stratégies de la société civile pour lutter contre la marginalisation

Nous avons vu comment les communautés de Kumbo, Bali et même Tombel ont organisé leur système d'approvisionnement en eau après leur récupération en 1991. Apres la reprise du contrôle, ces communautés ont créé des organes de gestion autonomes qui existe encore dans le cas de BALI. Notre réflexion sur l'après « période de guerre » dans les communautés nous amène à nous poser les questions suivantes : les changements organisationnels et de nouveaux rôles attribués aux membres de la communauté pourraient-elles conduire à une meilleure administration des systèmes d'adduction d'eau? À première vue, ces changements pourraient générer de nouvelles tensions sociopolitiques renforçant le pouvoir des élites et n'opérant aucun changement radical dans la gestion du système.

Par ailleurs, les actions contestataires des communautés dans les années 1990/1991 peuvent-elles être considérées comme illégales ou légitimes ? D'abord, nous sommes tentés de penser que la remise en état du système par la communauté est approuvée par les élites autochtones utilisant la gestion comme un autre forum de contrôle politique. Quant aux élites extérieures, elles consolident leurs positions en contribuant au développement de la communauté en échange de son vote lors des élections municipales et législatives par exemple.

Ainsi les systèmes d'approvisionnement en eau sont intimement liés aux dynamiques politiques. La rupture avec l'Etat a ensuite permis aux élites politiques locales d'entrer dans la scène politique et de gagner en popularité à travers leurs projets de développement locaux comme l'approvisionnement en eau. Ces élites ne se limitent pas à leurs nouvelles fonctions politiques, mais essaient de respecter les vieilles coutumes en matière de gestion de l'eau, d'où l'existence d'un chevauchement des fonctions. Les organes de gestion de l'eau fonctionnent ainsi sous la double pression de la fourniture de l'eau et des besoins de puissance. La relation entre ces organisations est politiquement complexe. Les différents cas (Kumbo, Bali et Tombel) évoqués ci-dessus illustrent notre point de vue et nous renseignent sur les intérêts particuliers des principaux acteurs. En vue de comprendre le rôle des chefs et leurs homologues dans les systèmes d'adduction d'eau communautaires, nous avons essayé de nous demander s'il existe une possibilité qu'ils soient intégrés légalement dans la gouvernance de l'eau au Cameroun.

Notre thèse examine en partie comment une organisation communautaire ou une identité commune dans la région des hauts plateaux de l'Ouest du Cameroun a influencé les relations entre les collectivités locales d'une part, et d'autres part leur influence dans la politique de gestion de l'approvisionnement local en eau. L'objectif spécifique était de décrire la pratique des partis politiques dans les zones étudiées, de décrire les réactions locales à la politique du parti au pouvoir et d'analyser l'impact des politiques locales dans la gestion des réserves d'eau. Cela nous a permis de relier la société civile à la notion de communauté analysée dans le chapitre 4. L'argument que nous voulons faire ici est que les communautés peuvent réagir très violemment à la politique locale (l'Etat) tout en utilisant les l'eau potable comme une arme. Nous attribuons cela à la complexité du processus historique et des politiques nationales, qui tous les deux ont prétendu tenir compte des réalités locales mais en réalité en les ignorant quand elles ne sont pas liées aux intérêts globaux.

Dans la même foulée, nous avons discuté la meilleure façon pour les petites villes et les villages d'être en phase avec l'administration publique et les ONG tout en tenant compte des réalités sociales locales. Une des préoccupations majeures provient de la contradiction que les gens voient entre la nécessité, d'une part, de soutenir le changement politique dans la communauté et au niveau national, d'autre part, leur objectif d'éviter la politisation et le danger lié à la fragmentation de l'organisation du village. Selon les villageois, la politique et l'organisation de la communauté ne doivent pas être mélangées. En même temps, convaincus que les chefs et leur entourage constituent des acteurs potentiels majeurs, nous nous

demandons s'il existe des possibilités de création des partenariats efficaces par exemple à travers des structures hybrides négociées à travers ou avec eux.

3.3. Gouvernance participative par le biais de partenariats hybrides

A la lumière des trois cas étudiés, il semble que l'approvisionnement communautaire en eau continuera d'être un élément clé dans les stratégies globales autour de l'eau. Si on veut qu'elles soient efficaces et durables, alors il existe un besoin pressant pour un réalignement du pouvoir par des changements dans les structures institutionnels. Ces dispositions devraient être telles que les communautés prennent le contrôle de leurs ressources et les processus de leur utilisation pendant que l'Etat conservera son rôle de régulateur. Le défi majeur n'est donc pas d'accepter le principe de l'intégration des projets, mais d'apprendre comment les intégrer au mieux. C'est une tâche qui exige une connaissance approfondie des questions liées à chaque composante, une flexibilité considérable ainsi qu'une compréhension approfondie du contexte culturel local. Une bonne approche doit éviter les stéréotypes selon lesquels les communautés sont des institutions homogènes désireuses et capables de gérer les ressources sur la base de la simple demande. Au contraire, elle se concentre sur des partenariats efficaces comme tremplin pour le succès (ou non) de la capacité de la communauté à créer le capital nécessaire pour travailler avec ses partenaires. Les institutions formelles et informelles sont toutes les deux importantes au Cameroun, en particulier au niveau de la communauté et de la Mairie.

3.3.1. La fragmentation institutionnelle: cohabitation du formel et de l'informel

Afin d'éclairer la question des autorités informelles (chefs), on doit dire que la gouvernance de l'eau dans les trois villes est toujours influencée par des pratiques coutumières, sous la direction de chefs traditionnels. La gestion traditionnelle de l'eau dans ces régions pose tout un éventail de problèmes: l'utilisation simultanée des lois coutumières et officielles relatives à l'utilisation de l'eau et de l'accès, la gestion des conflits et de sanctions contre les contrevents ainsi que celles relatives à la conservation des ressources en eau. De telles pratiques, à travers la chefferie, les règles coutumières qui régissent la distribution de l'eau, et les procédures pour le lancement de programmes de développement, sont «traditionnelles» car sous le contrôle des institutions coutumières. Cela parce que les agences d'aide et les instances de l'Etat sont contournées ou tout au plus consultées comme des partenaires secondaires.

Un agent de la mairie interrogé sur le rôle de la municipalité dans la prestation des services d'eau pour les communautés a révélé que les fonctions des conseillers municipaux semblent aller dans le sens d'une sorte de «décentralisation» de leurs responsabilités vers les chefs, la communauté, diverses associations de développement villageois… de même que les prestataires de services professionnels qui sont libres de décider jusqu'où ils peuvent aller dans leurs activités. En ce qui concerne le rôle de la municipalité dans la gestion des services d'approvisionnement en eau, l'agent municipal a affirmé ne rien savoir. Pourtant, assure-t-il, l'aide au développement de l'eau devrait passer normalement par ce bureau pour assurer la continuité et le suivi des opérations.

Il y a plusieurs niveaux et formes de partenariats. Premièrement, le partenariat public-privé-communauté avec comme partenaires la SNEC (le concessionnaire), le gouvernement canadien qui est intervenu à Kumbo et la population Nso. Les partenariats avec les collectivités peuvent aller du partenariat officiel plus ou moins formel qui implique principalement la communauté, surtout au début de la mise en œuvre du projet. En second lieu, on peut avoir le partenariat communautaire avec la communauté représentée par des associations et des leaders traditionnels. Un autre type de partenariat est celui des communautés et des collectivités locales avec le gouvernement local représenté par la municipalité. On peut cependant trouver d'autres niveaux de partenariat, celui des organisations non gouvernementales, le partenariat de la municipalité et de la communauté, tel qu'il fonctionne aujourd'hui à Kumbo. L'ONG GWP (Global Water Partnership) a contribué à faciliter la communication et la coopération entre la municipalité et la communauté.

Dans l'ensemble, la forme, le niveau et le degré de partenariats formés diffèrent d'une région à l'autre, selon les conditions locales. La participation peut être faible, informelle, immédiate comme une contribution en travail (transport des matériaux de construction), la mobilisation de la communauté pouvant prendre plusieurs formes, comme la gestion du système par exemple à travers un contrat de facturation et de recouvrement.

Ce phénomène n'est pas seulement propre à la région des Hauts Plateaux de l'Ouest, mais à tout le Cameroun. En raison d'une telle organisation, il y a un certain nombre d'autorités chargées d'assurer et de gérer l'approvisionnement en eau en milieu urbain. Dans notre enquête, il est devenu évident et important que la gouvernance de l'eau est très fragmentée au niveau local. En ce qui concerne la réalisation d'une coordination plus horizontale en matière

de gouvernance de l'eau en milieu urbain, nous pensons qu'il reste encore à tvouver. En conséquence, la question qui demeure est celle-ci: l'approche partenariale peut-elle être étendue à l'échelle nationale ? Est-il possible d'appliquer le principe de partenariats communauté/municipalité avec les ONG afin d'atteindre les objectifs à long terme, la confiance et le dialogue, la prise de décision partagée à l'échelle nationale?

Les questions de l'environnement (y compris l'eau), en d'autres termes, la gestion des ressources naturelles, sont juridiquement fragmentées: la part des gouvernements régionaux et locaux dans la prise de décision reste floue, une incertitude qui peut créer des tensions. Là où les juridictions se croisent et se chevauchent, les différents niveaux de gouvernement ont recours à la fois aux lois nationales et coutumières, d'où des confusions qui génèrent des conflits.

3.3.2. Vers un partenariat entre communauté et municipalité

De ce qui précède, nous avons montré que les institutions de l'eau, formelle et informelle, doivent avoir comme perspective d'atteindre des régimes durables. Nous avons également survolé Cela a aussi montré les différents scénarios institutionnels que les sociétés ont invoqués pour la gouvernance de l'eau. La complexité des structures institutionnelles peut être observée à de nombreuses échelles et niveaux. Une multitude d'organismes, d'institutions et d'arrangements sociaux existent dans la gouvernance de l'eau au Cameroun, avec des responsabilités couvrant l'ensemble des tâches de gestion des ressources. Les organismes officiels comprennent des ministères sectoriels et des institutions locales, la plupart des responsabilités s'étendant du niveau national aux niveaux les plus bas.

Faire travailler la municipalité et la communauté ensemble pour trouver des solutions est un facteur positif comme cela s'est fait à Kumbo mais c'est insuffisant puisque l'approvisionnement en eau et les services d'assainissement doivent être modernisés afin d'offrir des prestations durables et de qualité. En plus de la municipalité et de la communauté, le troisième pilier pour soutenir la durabilité des services est l'opérateur spécialisé (qui dans les cas de Kumbo et Bali sont les gouvernements canadiens et camerounais), qui fournit un appui technique à la municipalité pour développer les systèmes. Il fournit de l'eau potable à la communauté dans la quantité nécessaire ainsi que des services d'assainissement pour protéger l'environnement, contribuant ainsi à la santé publique.

Cette alliance entre les communautés, la municipalité et les organismes d'aide pourrait constituer l'épine dorsale de l'approche Kumbo/Bali pour un approvisionnement durable en eau et des services d'assainissement dans les villes si cela fonctionne. Néanmoins, elle doit encore être renforcée par la sensibilisation de la population en ce qui concerne l'eau et l'assainissement dans leurs localités. Il est également nécessaire d'ajuster les arrangements institutionnels du nouveau modèle, d'évaluer la performance des acteurs locaux et de former de nouveaux. En attendant, la question qui reste posée est celle de savoir d'où vient cette difficulté de cohabiter, est-ce l'Etat (une institution formelle avec la municipalité) ou est-ce la communauté ou encore les deux? Nous tenterons de répondre à cette question dans la section suivante.

Les Partenariats efficaces entre les décideurs et les communautés sont d'autant plus importants que les projets sont durables. Comme indiqué plus haut, la durabilité dépend essentiellement de la volonté des communautés à prendre en charge l'exploitation et la maintenance des systèmes. Cela dépendra de la manière dont la communauté a participé aux phases de planification et de mise en œuvre des projets. Les différents acteurs (communauté, donateurs, organismes extérieurs, gouvernement) de l'approvisionnement en eau ont chacun leurs objectifs. Ceux-ci ne tiennent pas nécessairement compte des valeurs culturelles, sociales et économiques des communautés dans leur approche, d'où des litiges et des projets inefficaces.

4. Quelles leçons tirer de l'exemple du Cameroun ?

4.1. Au-delà du cas du Cameroun, l'exemple de la France

Sur la base du raisonnement défendu tout au long de notre thèse, nous avons mis en exergue l'idée que le principal problème qui entrave la gouvernance de l'eau au Cameroun est la fragmentation des institutions du secteur et de l'hétérogénéité de sa société. Il y a toujours de grosses difficultés à trouver des points de convergence entre les institutions locales et le cadre national de l'eau. Dans les chapitres précédents, nous avons évoqué les difficultés de mettre en place des modèles hybrides et les maintenir en activité étant donné la fragmentation des communautés. Par la suite, nous avons analysé les difficultés de cohabitation entre les communautés et les autres partenaires de l'eau, tout en mettant en exergue la réticence des communautés par rapport au partenariat avec l'Etat.

Dans le dernier chapitre de notre thèse, nous avons présenté les éléments clés sur l'établissement des prix de l'eau. Toutes les tentatives proposant des possibilités d'avoir des modèles de gouvernance efficaces au Cameroun ont présenté leurs limites. Si nous revenions sur notre question de recherche, nous pourrions la reformuler de la façon suivante : comment les acteurs aussi hétérogènes peuvent-ils être intégrés dans un cadre unique et cohérent compte tenu de la complexité des communautés? Face aux problèmes de la gouvernance de l'eau au Cameroun, il est clair que nous avons affaire à un casse-tête. Il serait nécessaire de regarder les exemples des sociétés qui ont réussi à avoir des modèles qu'ils maîtrisent. Nous avons pensé nous inspirer de l'analyse de J-P. Haghe (2005) sur l'évolution du secteur de l'eau en France. De son analyse, nous pouvons aisément conclure que la mise en place d'un modèle est un processus long et fastidieux qui devrait être accompagné des moyens nécessaires (financiers, techniques, humaines, etc.) Dans son article, il distingue trois grandes périodes:

Une première période qu'il qualifie de révolutionnaire avec la mise en place d'une nouvelle législation et une stratégie de rationnement administratif avec changement radical du statut de l'eau qui passe d'une ressource primaire à un bien économique. La seconde période se situe entre 1800 et 1860 et correspond à la période où les institutions ont été conçues pour prendre en charge les différentes ressources en eau. Enfin la troisième période (1880-1910) liée à l'augmentation de la valeur intrinsèque de l'eau mais il faudra attendre les années 1960 pour que le modèle de gouvernance de l'eau soit stabilisé. Ce que nous pouvons retenir de cette analyse, c'est l'application de lois radicales, le changement du statut de l'eau et la mise en place de nouvelles institutions. Cette méthode nous semble être la seule façon de mettre en œuvre des lois et des décisions largement appliquées. La leçon tirée de cet exemple c'est qu'en France, l'obtention actuelle de prix stables ou d'une gouvernance efficace de l'eau est précédée par des périodes d'instabilité grave et de prise de décision radicale. Cette réflexion nous amène à la question suivante : est-il possible de transférer cette approche progressivement appliquée par la France à la société camerounaise?

C'est plutôt une question difficile à laquelle il est difficile de répondre mais on peut dire néanmoins qu'il y a quelques conditions préalables. Après les trois périodes présentées par Haghe (2005), nous pouvons clairement distinguer certaines tendances qui sont à la base du modèle qui a été adopté en France. Afin d'adopter une approche intégrée de la gestion de l'eau, il faudrait d'abord la reconnaissance de la valeur intrinsèque de l'eau comme un bien marchand et son intégration dans l'économie de marché. En outre, la France a créé un nouveau système législatif reconnaissant l'eau comme un bien économique. Plus tard, on a

procédé à une réorganisation complète du secteur de l'eau, qui a démantelé les anciennes structures et les perceptions telles qu'elles transparaissent dans la citation suivante.

«... Les années 1960 sont toujours présentées comme déterminantes pour cette évolution dans les pays industrialisés car c'est alors qu'un puissant lobby scientifique, industriel et financier a pu imposer ses normes sur cet espace encore perçu comme largement gratuit. Il est vrai que cette période est importante, car riche en transformations et ruptures ... pourtant une mise en perspective historique dans le cadre de la France montre que les transformations des années 1960 ne sont que l'aboutissement d'un processus progressif d'intégration au marches». (Haghe, 2005)

Nous sommes conscients du fait que de telles comparaisons peuvent être audacieuses parce que les deux entités (Cameroun et France) sont différentes mais elles possèdent un point commun: leur complexité. Il est cependant intéressant de noter que le système actuel en France a commencé depuis le début du 19e siècle. Il a fallu attendre les années 1960 (plus de cent ans) pour que le secteur de l'eau atteigne effectivement un modèle bien défini et durable *(Haghe, 2005).* Il est certain qu'il subit encore des ajustements suite aux changements environnementaux, économiques et sociétaux. Malgré le fait que les objectifs et les moyens aient été bien définis, il a fallu plus d'un siècle et demi pour parvenir à une gouvernance stable.

Ce qui nous intéresse dans le point de vue de l'auteur, c'est le fait qu'il présente la société française comme très diversifiée à un certain moment avec de multiples modèles de gestion de l'eau qui ont échoué, rendant difficile la gouvernance. Il est également intéressant de noter qu'il utilise plusieurs fois des termes comme «révolutionnaire», «rupture», dans le processus ce qui est le signe de changements radicaux. Dans le cas du Cameroun, nous pensons que l'un de ces actes révolutionnaires à considérer serait d'éviter les chefs et la chefferie. A notre avis, ce serait une étape importante visant à la perturbation des collectivités et des organisations sociales des Hautes Terres de l'Ouest Cameroun qui entravent la gouvernance. En attendant, nous tenons à souligner que de tels actes radicaux de réformes doivent être accompagnés des ressources nécessaires pour satisfaire les besoins de la société. Comme le prouvent les chapitres précédents, la société peut réagir violemment et perturber la mise en œuvre de telles réformes si elles ne répondent pas à ses besoins. Toutefois, si l'Etat rencontre des résistances, elles ne sont pas toujours directement liées aux réformes de l'eau, mais plutôt à son incapacité

à assurer la sécurité sociale, économique et politique. L'atmosphère est celle de la méfiance générale envers l'État.

De l'analyse qui précède, de nouvelles questions émergent, comme celle de l'État assumant pleinement son rôle de régulateur en créant un environnement propice, soit en cohabitant avec le secteur informel et les chefs d'une part, soit en les évitant d'autre part. Nous somme partisan du second choix.

4.2. Quelles contributions cette thèse apporte-t-elle?

Nous estimons en toute modestie que cette thèse apporte quelques éclairages sur trois éléments. Tout d'abord, elle fournit une évolution historique de la gouvernance de l'eau au Cameroun dans une perspective multi-juridictionnelle. Cette analyse révèle que la fragmentation institutionnelle crée une situation instable et une désorganisation qui affecte la gouvernance au Cameroun. La complexité des communautés et l'incertitude dans la gestion des eaux font que des acteurs de plus en variés influencent la forme de gouvernance.

En deuxième lieu, la thèse contribue à une analyse des diversités socioculturelles qui entravent l'instauration d'une politique intégrée dans la gouvernance de l'eau au Cameroun. La thèse décrit les fondements juridiques et institutionnels de la fragmentation des compétences afin de montrer que cette dernière influence la gouvernance de l'eau.

Au niveau conceptuel, la thèse s'est efforcée de participer aux débats sur la gouvernance de l'eau au Cameroun en présentant un point de vue socio juridique dans des sociétés complexes. L'inarticulation des institutions juridiques de gouvernance de l'eau montre que la fragmentation juridictionnelle peut être retrouvée dans une gamme de modèles de gouvernance. Cet aperçu montre que les conséquences de la fragmentation juridictionnelle ne sont pas automatiques ou prévisibles. De plus, les hypothèses problématisés sur «gouvernance» et «communauté» mettent l'accent sur la fragmentation institutionnelle. Nous postulons que le défi central de la gouvernance et de la gestion de l'eau se présente comme une tension entre intégration et fragmentation et trouvons que la littérature sur la gouvernance de l'eau ne parle pas assez des avantages et des limites de l'intégration. Par exemple, le problème d'échelle, une forme d'intégration, est une solution populaire aux défis de la gouvernance de l'eau. Enfin, la fragmentation est considérée comme une caractéristique fondamentale de la gouvernance de l'eau au Cameroun. En outre, la participation des

communautés et des autres acteurs aux initiatives de gouvernance contribue à une plus grande fragmentation des institutions de gouvernance.

4.3. Des tensions permanentes en matière de gouvernance de l'eau au Cameroun

Mon but dans cette thèse a été de considérer que la gouvernance communautaire de l'eau dans un contexte où les communautés luttent pour les ressources naturelles a contribué à déclencher une ère libérale qui est, à son tour, marquée par une intégration des idées de la communauté sur l'eau. Engager les parties prenantes à participer à la gestion de l'eau a été soutenu par une série de politiques gouvernementales en matière de gestion des ressources en eau. L'objectif de cette recherche était de comprendre et d'évaluer si les mécanismes de gouvernance pour l'allocation et de la gestion de l'eau au Cameroun améliorent l'approvisionnement local en eau et favorisent la durabilité "sur le terrain". Grâce à une étude de cas sur les stratégies d'approvisionnement en eau des Hauts Plateaux de l'Ouest, la thèse a évalué les modalités de gouvernance et les acteurs clés impliqués dans la distribution de l'eau, ainsi que la dynamique de la consommation d'eau. Considérant que le régime actuel de gouvernance au Cameroun est de nature polycentrique - que la responsabilité de la distribution de l'eau est dispersée entre les différents centres de prise de décision à un certain nombre d'échelles - le travail suscite un intérêt sous-jacent pour comprendre les implications des régimes de gouvernance polycentrique et le développement durable d'un système d'approvisionnement en eau de la collectivité. L'architecture de la gouvernance de l'eau au Cameroun peut aussi être considérée comme un patchwork soutenant différentes institutions avec des groupes différents.

Comme indiqué dans la thèse, deux défis principaux ont été retenus dans l'élaboration du cadre conceptuel: (1) le choix d'un ensemble gérable et utile de critères parmi un grand nombre d'options possibles discutés dans la littérature sur l'approvisionnement local en eau et sa durabilité, la gouvernance et la planification, et la politique de l'eau et sa gestion, et (2) le maintien de la cohérence du cadre, compte tenu des chevauchements et des interactions entre les différents critères. Les Hautes Terres de l'ouest se sont révelées être un cas utile pour deux raisons principales. Tout d'abord, la région a une pluviométrie de plus 1800mm/an et par conséquent, il ne devrait pas y avoir de pénurie d'eau. Nous voulions étudier la gestion des ressources en eau de la collectivité dans les petites villes par la compréhension du rôle du gouvernement camerounais, les petites communautés et de ses effets sur la viabilité du système local. Dans la conception de la recherche, nous avons étudié les systèmes

d'approvisionnement en eau de 3 petites villes qui sont BALI, KUMBO et BAFOU qui ont en partie utilisé le modèle de gestion communautaire. Dans les trois sites, nous avons inclu dans notre échantillon une analyse des difficultés liées à la gestion de leurs projets d'approvisionnement en eau. Une complication et découverte assez intéressante, c'est le fait que chacun des sites d'étude a présenté diverses formes d'aménagement communautaire, surtout avec le puits et la pompe à main publique utilisés majoritairement dans le cas de BAFOU.

Cette raison a été renforcée par la diversité des petites communautés dans cette région, avec des sites d'étude à la fois francophone et anglophones. En plus, le régime de gouvernance dans cette région se compose d'un ensemble de dispositions opérant à différentes échelles (les communautés régionales, les municipalités et les petites villes) qui supposent la participation des acteurs gouvernementaux et non gouvernementaux. Cet arrangement a permis de comprendre comment coexistent les différents éléments d'un régime de gouvernance polycentrique et collaboratif. Pour évaluer l'efficacité globale de la gouvernance de l'eau, l'attention s'est dirigée vers les interactions entre les multiples organismes gouvernementaux et administrations à différentes échelles dont les mandats ont des implications pour les décisions relatives à l'allocation de l'eau, à la répartition de la prise de décision depuis les organes centraux jusqu'aux échelles des bassins versants et des décideurs locaux, et à la participation accrue des acteurs non gouvernementaux qui influencent les décisions. Tout au long de nos développements, nous avons présenté les rôles des parties prenantes, les relations et les perspectives en matière de gouvernance de l'eau au Cameroun, avec un accent particulier sur l'approvisionnement en eau de la collectivité et de la gestion des bassins versants. Nous avons aussi examiné le degré de cohérence ou de disparité entre les différentes parties prenantes et entre les rôles des acteurs formels et informels et les pratiques réelles.

4.4. Les institutions de gouvernance de l'eau du Cameroun

Nous avons analysé tous les acteurs impliqués dans la gouvernance de l'eau dans le cadre de la gestion communautaire afin de produire et d'intégrer l'information concernant les individus, les groupes et les institutions qui sont concernées et qui devraient bénéficier de la gestion de l'eau et des ressources connexes d'une part, et d'autre part, les individus, les groupes et les institutions qui peuvent influencer et de contribuer à la gestion des systèmes d'adduction d'eau. Les préoccupations les plus pertinentes trouvées dans l'étude comprennent

l'imprécision des rôles et le chevauchement des responsabilités des intervenants, la disparité entre les rôles des parties prenantes et des pratiques officielles réelles, le manque de mécanismes de rétroaction efficaces et le manque de coordination et de participation à différents niveaux des acteurs dans la gestion de l'eau. Des améliorations urgentes doivent prendre place afin de répondre progressivement à ces préoccupations. Une coordination efficace et une rétroaction entre les parties concernées ont été trouvé difficiles à atteindre dans tous les sites. Il reste encore beaucoup à faire en termes d'infrastructures physiques des systèmes existants.

Le Cameroun dispose d'un ensemble spécifique de dispositions formelles sur la manière dont les différentes parties prenantes auront une influence sur le développement, l'utilisation et la conservation des systèmes d'eau. Le bon fonctionnement des modalités de gouvernance a besoin d'une compréhension commune sur les rôles et responsabilités des intervenants, mais ces dispositions ne sont pas nécessairement comprises de la même manière par les différents acteurs. Nous avons constaté que les différents segments des communautés influencent la conception des institutions et des organisations, et la façon dont elles mettent en œuvre les pratiques de gestion de l'eau de façon quotidienne. La gouvernance n'est donc pas l'apanage de l'Etat et n'est pas non plus limitée à une échelle ou un domaine particulier : elle ressort des interactions entre l'État, les entreprises et acteurs bénévoles à des échelles multiples.

Dans cette optique, nous avons examiné les différentes formes de gouvernance et leurs principales limites. Quelles que soient les définitions de la gouvernance, il est évident que les communautés des petites villes du Cameroun (en particulier la société civile émergente) occupent un rôle central dans la gouvernance de l'eau et la mise en place de processus de gestion. En examinant les différentes dimensions du concept qui peuvent développer de bonnes structures de gouvernance, nous avons mis en avant le besoin de comprendre la réalité et la complexité des différents intérêts des parties prenantes et les relations existantes.

Le cadre institutionnel complexe mis en place au niveau national inhibe également la prise de décision participative. Par exemple, le secteur de l'eau au Cameroun se trouve dans tous les ministères, ce qui représente une barrière qui limite la participation de nombreux acteurs dans le processus de gouvernance. Ces confusions dans la localisation du pouvoir reflètent les défis auxquels les pouvoirs publics sont confrontés en ce qui concerne l'application des règles et des règlements. Cette complexité ne peut être résolue que par l'implication effective des autorités locales, à la fois formelles et informelles, telles que les municipalités et les chefs

dans la gestion de l'eau. Les institutions informelles elles-mêmes se forment et sont façonnées par les négociations quotidiennes et les relations de pouvoir entre les différents acteurs, alors que les institutions officielles représentent des règles qui exigent l'application de la troisième partie et sont supposées applicables à tous. En conséquence, l'image des «institutions communautaires» dans le cadre de la gestion communautaire de l'eau serait incomplète si elle négligeait les réseaux complexes d'interactions, les institutions informelles et les divergences sur le contrôle des ressources au sein des groupes issus des communautés.

Après avoir discuté de la notion de communauté à partir de différents points de vue, il est évident que les images souvent observées dans la politique camerounaise sont le reflet d'une mauvaise interprétation de la réalité, et sont, en conséquence, un guide trompeur pour des stratégies pratiques d'intervention. Une communauté est composée de divers groupes sociaux, chacun possédant des objectifs et des aspirations différentes. Il ne s'agit pas de contester qu'ils ont des valeurs communes dans le contexte actuel des débats pour la réalisation des objectifs de développement durable, mais il y a eu plusieurs études dont les représentations idéalisées de communauté et des bons résultats des projets communautaires. Le fait de considérer la communauté comme un corps homogène et qui travaille pour le développement global de l'ensemble constitue une vision erronée de la réalité.

Par conséquent, dans les pratiques quotidiennes, les frontières formelles et informelles sont souvent floues et lorsque les acteurs de la communauté sont placés en position de choix, leur participation est directement influencée par les dynamiques du pouvoir au niveau local (comme les chefs et les chefferies tels que définis dans la thèse).

Quelques limites à ce travail

Comme dans la plupart des enquêtes, des difficultés ont été rencontrées au cours de la période de collecte des données, et plusieurs d'entre elles étaient identiques dans les différents sites. Un des problèmes fréquemment rencontrés est le temps limité, pour remplir les questionnaires (il a fallu plusieurs heures pour les administrer, participer à des rencontres avec les groupes d'intérêt). Nous devions recueillir des données primaires à partir d'un nombre considérable de répondants dans un très court laps de temps. En outre, la situation géographique des lieux de captage et d'autres sites intéressants (bureaux de projets d'eau, chefferies etc.) a rendu les enquêtes difficiles car ils sont éloignés les uns des autres.

En général, nous avons rencontré des réticences de la part des décideurs à différents niveaux, (association d'utilisateurs, municipalités, élites) qui se refusaient à partager l'information. Ce fut l'une des raisons pour lesquelles les données statistiques sur les finances font défaut, ce qui limite la réflexion. Il y avait aussi plusieurs cas où les répondants, en particulier ceux qui étaient méfiants envers les chercheurs, n'ont pas voulu honorer leurs rendez-vous pour les entretiens, alors que toutes les dispositions avaient été prises.

En outre, l'étude se concentre sur la gouvernance de l'eau, un secteur qui est incontestablement très délicat car elle est utilisée à des fins politiques par le gouvernement actuel et les élites locales. La sphère politique sous-estime en effet la capacité des communautés à produire et/ou à accéder à l'eau par leurs moyens, pensant les rendre par là dépendant des organismes d'État et donc politiquement soumis. L'aide à l'approvisionnement de l'eau est utilisée par le gouvernement pour donner l'image d'un gouvernement bienveillant en prétendant tout faire pour l'accès de tous à l'eau. Dans le même temps, les groupes d'opposition exagèrent souvent le sort des populations dans l'espoir de détourner l'opinion publique pour leur avantage politique. Dans ce contexte, la prudence est de mise pour évaluer la pertinence des différents points de vue.

En outre, la période examinée signifie que c'est en partie une étude historique qui implique une forte dépendance par rapport aux archives des institutions concernées et de la mémoire des individus au niveau de la communauté. Dans ces conditions, les relevés antérieurs à la période 1950 à 2001 sont difficiles à trouver. Enfin, la mémoire au niveau de la communauté qui remonte à plus de dix ans n'est pas fiable car, depuis lors, le Cameroun a connu une histoire mouvementée et la possibilité que les comptes soient trafiqués au niveau officiel ne peut pas être exclue.

Comme déjà mentionné dans la partie introductive, les Hauts Plateaux de l'Ouest Cameroun ont une identité culturelle très forte. La culture et la tradition dans cette région stipulent que pour préserver les modes de vie, il y a beaucoup de choses qui doivent être gardées secrètes. Par exemple, les jeunes filles se sentent frustrées car elles n'ont pas le droit de voir les membres des sociétés secrètes alors que les garçons ont le privilège de les voir car seuls les hommes y ont droit. Ceux-ci sont d'ailleurs éduqués de façon à ne jamais parler de ce qu'ils savent à ce propos. Nous soutenons vivement que cet aspect des communautés les rend cohérentes dans une certaine mesure et donc difficiles à manipuler, ce qui signifie que nous

avons quelque chose comme «un Etat dans l'Etat» et donc des choses qu'il sera difficile d'intégrer dans la gouvernance.

Au Cameroun, la gouvernance de l'eau n'est pas une arène simple par laquelle la ressource est un «atout politique" que les politiciens locaux peuvent manipuler pour avoir des voix. Les significations complexes liés à l'eau, au-delà de la simple idée que c'est un moyen de subsistance, peuvent rendre les relations entre les communautés, les ménages et les différentes formes d'approvisionnement en eau complexes, dépassant le domaine d'une simple étude sur les ressources naturelles. Les études de cas ont montré comment il est essentiel de comprendre la réalité derrière les façades de la politique, les idées reçues sur les capacités et les rôles des communautés et enfin les diverses relations institutionnelles concurrentes qui se chevauchent au niveau local.

Lors de l'élaboration de notre thèse, nous avons trouvé de nombreuses pistes que nous n'avons pas pu explorer, faute de temps. Il serait ainsi intéressant, comme un point de départ, de mieux étudier les pratiques socioculturelles centrées sur l'accès à l'eau et leurs conséquences sur la communauté locale en termes de santé et d'assainissement, ainsi que la stabilisation de la société. Ce serait donc une étude de petite échelle, qui prend en compte le contexte socioculturel des communautés dans les petites villes plutôt que d'une vision plus large de l'Etat. Par conséquent, ce serait une approche intéressante d'essayer de tester non seulement les aspects socioculturels, mais aussi politiques et économiques des Hauts Plateaux de l'Ouest dans le cadre théorique principal.

Sur la base de ces réflexions, il y a un certain nombre de domaines de recherche que nous trouvons intéressants à explorer. Nous recommandons d'étudier davantage comment exploiter les possibilités de co-apprentissage avec les communautés par le biais des plates-formes de recherche communes, créer et mener des programmes de recherche avec d'autres partenaires, tels que les universités, les gouvernements et les acteurs de la société civile. Nous estimons qu'une meilleure compréhension et une interprétation moins conflictuelle du capital social ou de la société (communauté) conduiraient à des formes plus consensuelles de l'action collective.

Il serait en outre intéressant de voir comment les collectivités réagissent face aux intérêts politiques établis, comme l'État, la police et les médias populaires, en termes de cooptation d'intimidation, d'infiltration, de reportages tendancieux, de paternalisme et de cultures de dépendance. On aborderait ainsi les tensions entre l'intégration et la marginalisation en termes

de résilience des communautés, et donc les différentes relations envers l'Etat et les collectivités face à la crise.

On lancerait une étude comparative avec d'autres sites (villages, périphéries urbaines et petites villes), en concentrant les efforts sur les différents mécanismes par lesquels l'appartenance socioculturelle, économique, politique et religieuse joue un rôle dans l'adoption de modes de gouvernance de l'eau. A ce propos, nous avons l'intention d'explorer la façon dont les structures communautaires sont en interaction dans le contexte politique actuel et comment les identités associées à chacune d'elles sont mobilisées à des fins spécifiquement économiques et politiques. Ce complément d'enquête pourrait se concentrer sur les comités de gestion de l'eau, mais il pourrait également être intéressant de l'appliquer à d'autres sites, en insistant sur les deux formes d'organisation sociale et en relevant les attitudes contradictoires envers les autres ressources naturelles.

En guise de conclusion

Dans cette thèse, nous avons opposé deux modèles de gouvernance des ressources communautaires au Cameroun. Tout d'abord, la rhétorique centrée sur la communauté sur laquelle s'appuie le discours libérale du gouvernement n'est pas transférée sur le terrain. En second lieu, la gouvernance réelle des ressources communautaires est centrée sur des pratiques de gouvernance internes et des stratégies de négociation à long terme qui remettent en question les visions idéalisées de la communauté évoquées par le gouvernement camerounais, les militants et les ONG. Dans notre dernier chapitre, nous avons enfin examiné les implications de ces arguments dans la conceptualisation de la gouvernance communautaire au Cameroun.

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